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[A CRUEL CHASTISEMENT.]

CHRISTINE'S REVENGE;

OR,

O'HARA'S WIFE.

CHAPTER IX.

—Sorrow, smile thy sweetest,
Though all bright things be the fleetest.
Ah! I cannot, let me sigh:
If I weep not I shall die!

CHRISTINE, whose head was cool, whose nerves were firm, whose pulse was even, whose health was perfect, on this especial wintry afternoon was in her own room writing letters, when the rap came on the door, and the summons to attend Lady Donnamore.

She started to her feet, wiped her pen. Her heart began to beat. Was her plot discovered? Had Roland's impetuosity ruined everything, and Elaine's pride taken alarm? No thought of the impassioned words which she had written to James Fitz-Stephens crossed her mind. She threaded the corridors leading to the rooms of the countess.

Her head held high, her silken skirts trailing after her, not feeling appalled, only enraged, at the idea that her prey had escaped her, and so she entered the rose-coloured boudoir, where the countess sat irate, cold, motionless, beautiful, with a pitiless beauty, a cloud on the marble brow, the raven hair swept away from it, the eyes, coldly penetrating, were fixed upon the governess with a merciless severity.

Lady Donnamore looked as if she could have

signed the death warrant of Christine or of any other creature beneath her, without a quiver of her eyelids or an extra quickening of her pulse, and so she could, doubtless.

"Mattelle, you have been acting disgracefully. Stand there where I can see you. Don't attempt to excuse yourself!"

Christine smiled a defiant smile. She thought the game was over, that Lady Donnamore had discovered the daring love of Roland for Lady Elaine.

"I do not, Lady Donnamore—I do not excuse myself. I know that love laughs at locksmiths."

"Insolent!" cried Lady Donnamore, with a curl of the lips. "You even insolent; this is surprising. You must learn your place, you know. I am determined, unless you apologise humbly at once, I will dismiss you without a recommendation. I will let the world know that you are unfit to enter any respectable house, even in the capacity of an upper servant. You seem so strangely to forget who and what you are!"

"Apologise, your ladyship! To whom?"

"To Lady Julia Saville."

The countess tossed the note which the governess had written towards her. It fell on the carpet at her feet.

Christine's quick eye saw at a glance what it was. She did not stoop to pick it up. Her eyes flamed, her nostrils dilated, her fine eyes flashed.

Now, it was a fact that there was a cat-like instinct in the Countess of Donnamore which made it pleasant to her to inflict torture on this rebellious and impassioned French girl.

She delighted in the writhings which were

futile in the wrath which she believed impotent. She always said with a cold smile that "Mattelle amused her."

Christine saw the curl of the haughty lip, and anathematised the countess in her heart.

"Pick up that note," said the countess, in her tone of haughty, insolent command.

"I see what it is," Christine began.

"Pick it up," repeated the countess. "You can talk after, but not much."

Christine gnashed her teeth again, and again anathematised the countess in the depth of her heart; but she picked up her note—her own note written to the man she loved.

She was white as ashes. She shook like a leaf in a wintry tempest.

"Now read it," said Lady Donnamore.

"I—I have read it," gasped Christine.

"Well, then, if you have read it you must know what I think of your shameless pursuit of a married man. You are an old maid, and plain. Your days of romance ought to end when this man's as much above you as I am—laughs all your foolish old sentimental feelings to scorn. And how dare you insult my guest, the Lady Julia, by writing of her so, for you mean to pour insults on her. Poor Fitz-Stephens has lost his head for her now—is mad for her sake—worships her—grovels at her feet!"

The cruel countess spoke slowly, and stabbed Christine with every word.

"But men in society act so often. I repeat, how dare you insult my guest?"

"Lady Julia is a shameless——"

"Silence!" cried Lady Donnamore, in a louder tone than she had yet used. "Apologise to the Lady Julia humbly, or take the alternative of

leaving the house this instant without a character!"

"Ah, how little that would affect me!" thought Christine. "If only you knew how little I care for 'my character' in the conventional sense. It is because if I stay on here you shall writhe in the future as I writhe to-night. That I will eat the bread of humility and bite the dust at your bidding only for revenge! revenge! revenge! How sweet is the sound in my heart as the spirits of the air whisper it to me! how sweet! Ah! I will do more. I will sack your proud castle of Donnamore even while you are there, and—who knows?—the tongues of your pampered hounds may be red with your heart's blood. If the people rise there will be an English and Irish 'terror,' as well as the one of old France in '93."

"Apologise," repeated the countess, "humbly to the Lady Julia."

"I will."

At that moment the inner door opened, and there entered the Lady Julia with her panther-like grace, her yellow tresses, her cold blue eyes, her claret velvet skirts.

She smiled a deadly smile, and stood before Christine with her arms held behind her.

Why so?

"Apologise," repeated Lady Julia.

"What am I to say?" asked Christine, with white lips.

"Say that you are half insane on the score of a foolish scene enacted years ago by Captain Fitz-Stephens. Say that he made fun of you and you believed him, and when you found it was fun you became insane, and I kept you on in charity. Say that you humbly apologise, and that you will never write or speak to Captain Fitz-Stephens again because you know he laughs you to scorn."

In a mechanical way Christine repeated what the countess dictated word for word.

"Now courtesy to her ladyship," said the countess. "Courtesy to her ladyship. Courtesy deeply."

And still whispering to her own heart: "For revenge! Only for revenge!" Christine bowed humbly to the Lady Julia Saville, lowering her eyes meekly.

And then, suddenly and swiftly, the fashionable woman whose photographs sold in dozens in Regent Street; who was fond of displaying herself in fantastic costumes to the public (in cartes) as if she had been a popular actress; the Lady Julia Saville, who had been the belle of five London seasons; who had danced seven times at one ball with the Prince of Wales; the Lady Julia Saville, who gave her name to hats and bonnets, gloves and collars, struck Christine the governess violently and suddenly across the face with a cruel little hunting-whip which she had kept concealed behind her until that moment.

Christine winced, started, and uttered a low cry of pain. Her face was disfigured by a livid mark. Visions of a summons for assault against the great lady and the marble countess as abettor of the cowardly assault flitted through her mind.

How the newspapers would prate! How the people would talk, and then—why, then, in a few weeks all would be forgotten—the affair hushed up by the gold of those two women. The most popular journals would write her down.

Yes; some of them would hint that the insolent person deserved what she got. Ah! the titles and the gold of those two women would dazzle "special correspondents," and lead lawyers along blindfold to all save their splendour—deaf to all the wrongs of Christine, however eloquently pleaded. Mademoiselle saw it all in a glance.

"Ho! ho! ho! The longer I wait for my revenge the sweeter it will be in the end," she said to herself. "The blood of the fair-haired woman shall pay for this."

She looked once at the countess, whose marble face expressed nothing but contempt; who was silent, but who smiled faintly.

"Now the dog is horsewhipped let it go," said Lady Julia, with a laugh.

The next moment she had lighted a cigarette, and was lounging back on a silken couch smoking calmly.

Lady Julia Saville was no reader of human faces. She was too much accustomed to regard humanity in general as an element created for her especial benefit and use.

It was immaterial to her what any particular atom suffered or enjoyed. She had not even the spurious, selfish, tyrannical benevolence of the Countess of Donnamore.

She was far too indolent to take any pleasure in coercing or persecuting the poor with new-fangled systems of education, in coarse kinds of work at scanty pay, and other methods of making them feel the yoke, dispensing coals and soup and warm flannel once a year, as did Lady Donnamore.

No; Lady Julia systematically tyrannised over and chilled those beneath her much in the spirit in which many a one drives an unwilling mule along a tiresome road without patience and without mercy.

So it happened that Lady Julia did not notice the fearful expression on Mademoiselle Mattelle's face as she stopped for a moment on her way across the room, and looked backwards at the two splendid women of title.

Christine was white as death save for the livid mark that Lady Julia's whip had made across her cheek and the bridge of her nose, but her eyes gleamed with a fire that was quite satanic. Her lip was raised in a ghastly smile. Her white teeth glittered.

Lady Julia knew it not, but she was truly within an inch of losing her life at that moment. Christine said to herself:

"Shall I fly at her and strangle her at once? hold her proud white throat in these strong, brown hands until the tongue protrudes and the face is black, and the life quivers out of the panting heart? Yonder countess should not drag me off, nor could she summon her slaves until I had done the work, and then—well, they might hang me if they liked."

Thus she thought, but the next moment she resolved to endure and to wait for that more thorough and complete revenge which she had promised herself.

She passed swiftly out of the room, but when she had closed the door behind her she listened on the threshold, and then she heard the low, triumphant laughter of those two women.

CHAPTER X.

How's the day and how's the hour?
See the front of battle pour.
See approach proud Edward's power:
Chains and slavery.

TIME had passed on. The Lady Julia still lingered at the town house of the Donnamores. The year turned, and the season commenced. February was come, and London began to be gay. Aristocratic families returned to town. Fitz-Stephen's wife went to Rome with her relatives. The handsome guardsman put off his journey to the imperial city week by week.

Lady Julia went now to balls, routes, assemblies every night, usually attended by him. It was time that she had led him captive, that he was her slave, that he had no option save to do her bidding. Was he in love? Was he under a spell? Was he afraid of her? What was the magic which made him submit now daily and hourly to her wildest caprices, as an Eastern slave submits to his tyrant?

Lady Julia would drive into Sloane Street and rush like a storm into a certain millinery establishment which she patronised with extravagant orders, exacting long credit, though she could have paid with ease at once; and bullying and insulting, and driving the young people about as if they were a pack of curs. Sometimes she would bring back a hat or a bonnet that had displeased her, tear it across, and fling it in a fury on the counter. Anon she would question some of the girls closely—in solently, as to their mode of living. What beds they slept on? How many in a room? How many dresses they possessed? What salary

they received? What they had for dinner? She would break into hoarse laughter, and remark that her servants, lazy wretches, were far better off.

She saw the young people, many of whom were ladylike and refined, writhe under her insults, and she enjoyed herself immensely. She was hated, but alas, such is the power of wealth and rank, she was feared, and everybody bent to her will.

Christine Mattelle had subdued every manifestation of feeling since the day when she received that cut with the whip, but she had a little book at the very bottom of her trunk—a small leather pocket-book, in which was written in blood (for she wounded her hand to obtain it) these words:

DEC. 17, 1863.

I, CHRISTINE MATTELLE, was struck across the face with the hunting-whip, and by the hand of Julia Saville. Her life is my price for it. C. M.

Every night she used to take this out and read it, and gloat over it when her door was fastened and her lamp was lighted, and then she would lock it up again.

So time went on. Lady Elaine sat much alone now for a girl of her age, reading poems. Christine managed to procure from the library French books of a certain class, not indeed those which the father of a family would put on the fire if he found his daughter of fifteen reading them—no, nothing to shock or disgust the fastidious, only books which told stories of genius in rags, heroism and noble endurance in a garret, and so Elaine read and read and read until her brain was in a whirl.

The image of Roland, destined, so mademoiselle said, to rise to eminence, to make the world bow down and do him homage in the days to come, the image of Roland—whose passionate love for herself she believed to be her own secret, was ever in her mind. Was this love?

No, a thousand times no. Elaine's heart of woman was not yet awake—would not awaken for years. It was romance; it was fancy; it was pity; it was generous enthusiasm for the noble and the true; it was not love, not one throe of passion in all the girl's pulses, a maiden heart, but an awakened fancy.

And Roland, what of him? As time went on his love for Elaine grew strong and terrible, as was Christine's hatred for her enemies. He felt that he could not wait to win her now, that she must be his at all risks, at all costs.

Christine inflamed his fancy with her insinuations. She urged him on. She told him that unless he made great haste and wedded Elaine, that the secret would be discovered, and his expected bride torn from his eager arms. And then she set her subtle brains and indomitable will to work to bring this most incongruous marriage about quickly.

It was one bleak March night, the bitter north-east wind howled down the chimneys, and swept the street like an avenging host. It was nearly ten o'clock, Oxford Street was comparatively silent, when Roland walked along towards his lodgings with his poor coat buttoned close, and his hat drawn over his eyes.

Once a week he stood in the schoolroom of the Belgravian mansion as a model of Romeo for the earl's children and their governesses.

At the catalogue he still worked nightly, and he saved up the money he earned to repay Christine Mattelle, thus he did not allow himself more comforts than of yore.

He was returning now from his work at the catalogue. He had seen Elaine that evening at a distance, dressed all in simple white, with a sash of sky blue, and a collar of turquoises. She was going through the hall with her young sister and the Lady Julia Saville, whose young it was on that evening to chaperone the young girls to some grand juvenile ball.

Elaine had seen him, given him a glance full of kindness, and passed on into the splendid carriage, with its pawing horses, and attendant servants.

"And her heart is as far from me as the poles

are asunder," he said to himself, with a lover's true instinct.

He reached his door and was about to enter with his latch-key, when a man crossed the street rapidly, and coming up to him, laid a hand on his shoulder.

"I have been watching for you for hours," he said, in sad, earnest tones.

Roland saw by the lamplight the pale, worn face of Sullivan, the lank, black hair, the eyes sorrowful and sombre.

"Are you failing us, Roland?"

"I! Good heavens! No!"

"You do not come to our meetings now."

"Because I am employed at night; but my heart is with you."

"Is it? I had doubted it. They make much of you at that great house, do they not?"

"I am reckoned as beneath the servants."

"So? but there is a lady who is seen walking with you after dusk in the park."

"Yes, that is not what the great people call a lady."

"Oh, an affair of the heart with some damsel of the household. But this is not the time for that—not for love sonnets, Roland, when we scent powder in the air, and hear the tramp of armed men in our dreams. We, who desire to free our lands from the oppressors!"

"Tell me only what you want me to do, and I will do it," said Roland.

"Walk along with me," said Sullivan; "the meeting is not yet dispersed. I want to introduce you to some new members, besides, we are to have a supper at eleven. You must join us, you are invited. There is a daring scheme on foot. I think you are chosen as the head of the expedition."

"I?"

"Yes, because you know and understand the country; the valley of the Morah; the town of Dungan, the stronghold of the tyrants, Donnamore Castle!"

"And what is required of me?" Roland asked.

"You are expected there," Sullivan answered. "Messages have been sent all over the country telling the people to hold themselves in readiness; that an agent is coming who can assist them with the best information; who has orders to organise the nucleus of an army. You must contrive to gather together eight hundred men, and you must take with you a detachment of two hundred. At once you must search the houses of the gentry for arms. Donnamore Castle is doomed; it is written down for destruction in our book of laws. It is to be first ransacked from the wine cellars, where a thousand pounds' worth of rare wine lies idle, while the people are perishing for lack of bread. It is to be ransacked from these cellars to the galleries for sculpture and paintings, and all that finery which we dare not sell is to be burnt. A fit punishment, is it not, for the haughty woman who urges on her tool Foster to drive hard bargains, and seize the goods of the starving tenants? Whatever of the plate and linen and bedding and portable furniture the castle contains, is to be divided as lawful spoil among the people. The sheep and poultry on the castle farm is to be killed and cooked to feed the starving. All the serving men who resist are to be put to the sword, and the victors have orders to burn the castle to the ground, not to leave one stone upon another."

"After that a thousand men are to march upon Dungan, surprise the garrison, and make prisoners of all who resist. Then you will hold the town and dictate your own terms. Three thousand armed men will land from Canada and the United States within two months. They will march through the country calling up the people to arms; the voice of the liberators will be heard from one end of the Green Isle to the other. By this time next year we shall hold all the principal towns. Does not your heart leap at the thought, Roland? Ireland for ourselves? Ireland with the accursed rule of the tyrant broken? The oppressors laid low? While the voices of laughter and joy shall resound through our green valleys, where now we hear only the

moans of the sick, and the pitiful cries of the starving?"

Roland's heart beat at the highly-coloured picture which Sullivan drew in all honesty. Only one thought of pain darkened the brightness of this fairy vision of liberty, wealth and happiness: would he not be a traitor if he led the expedition against Donnamore? He who was receiving payment for work from the oppressors? He sighed.

"Why am I chosen for this?" he asked.

"Because you have eloquence. You have the fire of genius. The verses you have written have already immense circulation. You will out-rival Thomas Moore, who only wrote the verses but did nothing for the people. You will be poet and soldier in one; it is the most glorious destiny that man could wish for."

Roland's heart rose with hopes wild and baseless, splendid and glorious. He felt himself the deliverer of Ireland, a victor whose brows were wreathed with laurel. He sat aloft enthroned, and by his side was his bride Elaine, her heart swelling with joy at his triumphs. The two young men had walked rapidly, and now approached the narrow street wherein was the "Rose Tavern." It was an ancient house, with projecting windows and low roof, a relic of old London. There was a light behind the red curtain in the bar, but no noise, not a voice, not a footstep. As Sullivan and Roland entered the narrow-flagged passage they walked to the end, turned to the right, and then found themselves in complete darkness, but there was a muffled sound of voices to the left. Sullivan leaned heavily on Roland's shoulder.

"Listen," he said. "I saw two policemen in the street. I fear they are in the outer passage. Crouch down," and he pushed him into an unexpected recess in the wall, and there the two crouched and listened, but they heard nothing.

CHAPTER XI.

Who would be a traitor, knave?
Who has base as a slave?
Who would fill a coward's grave,
Let him turn and flee.

ROLAND and Sullivan crouched silently in the dark passage, afraid to breathe, listening for the footsteps to advance or recede.

Presently they heard a voice close to them, a gruff voice.

"Fetch us a lantern here, Jack. I'm sure there's a passage this way leads out to the lane, and I think there's a room on the right side."

"The left side," said another voice.

Sullivan pulled Roland down flat on his face, pushed open a door under a staircase, and whispered:

"Creep in."

Silently, on hands and knees, the two crept in among a motley assemblage of bushes, brooms, firewood, &c., which was there stored for the use of the household.

It was impossible even to sit upright in this wretched den, but the two waited patiently until they heard the steps and voices of the police outside.

"There's nothing here," said one, "and no door, nothing of the kind; it's a blind alley at the back of the house, where they keep the brooms and water pails and such like. There's a staircase. I'll go up."

They heard his heavy creaking boots above their heads, and anon they heard the loud voice of a fierce Irishwoman, the landlady of the "Rose," who came out of a sort of laundry on the little landing, a room where linen was washed, then dried on ropes before a huge fire, and afterwards ironed, aired and folded. Mrs. Burke was very busy, very hot, very angry, as her voice testified.

"I'd be glad indeed to know to what I'm indebted for this pleasant visit, gentlemen," she began. "It's a pity a hard-working woman can't do an hour's washing and ironing, but what a couple of bobbies must come to pry and see if all's right and above board. Walk in, pray, if you want to know how many pairs of

stockings is hanging on the line, and how many shirts is airing before the fire."

"Nothing of the kind, mum. We don't come to look after stockings and such like, but we heard you had a room which you let to the Fenians, and their meetings ain't allowed. We've come to search this part of the house, if you please."

"Begorra, if it's Fenians you want you've come to the wrong shop," cried Mrs. Burke. "Poor wretches, there's none of them about now. They are frightened out of their lives at the police and the soldiers. It's two years and more since I heard the sound of a Fenian voice. Not the tip of a Fenian's boot have I seen for two years, not a morsel of one anywhere in all this city of London. Poor boys, they've seen their folly and gone their ways." And Mrs. Burke began to sob.

Sullivan, grave to melancholy as he mostly was, fairly shook with laughter when he heard Mrs. Burke's remarks.

Roland was too much excited to appreciate the grim humour of the situation. He listened and longed to come out into the fresh air. He felt sick and tired and exhausted.

It is a grand thing to be a liberator, to be ready to die a heroic death for one's country and one's freedom, but it is a mean thing to crouch in a cupboard among pulls and brooms, knowing that if you are caught you will be sent to prison.

"Is there no room upstairs again, Mrs. Burke?" asked the policeman, mildly.

"Yes, sir," replied Mrs. Burke, speaking with a perfect awful politeness, "there's my room, and my husband's in it at this present moment with a cold in his head and a hot bottle at his feet, if you must know, and if you'll be so good as to step up, you'll find him most likely asleep, for he took a glass of whiskey toddy to warm him about an hour ago, and I haven't heard him stir since; but before you do me the honour to search me place, perhaps you'll have the kindness to show your search warrant."

"You're a very clever woman, Mrs. Burke," replied the policeman. "The next time we do ourselves the pleasure of paying you a visit we will have a search warrant, depend upon it, and we won't be put off with any tales of whiskey toddy and hot bottles."

The two men took their departure, and the mocking, derisive, insulting laughter of Mrs. Burke awoke the echoes of the passages.

"Now's our time," said Sullivan. "Let us come out; I'm so stiff I can hardly move."

They crept out and stood up and stretched their limbs, and then Sullivan felt along the wall.

"Here it is," said he.

He had found a certain spring. He pressed it, and the wall sprang forward. Roland saw a flight of steep stone steps, damp and dreadful to look on. These led down between dirty whitewashed walls to another passage, a dimly burning oil lamp hung from a chain fixed in the low ceiling in the dreary passage beneath.

Sullivan, followed by Roland, descended this frightful staircase, after carefully closing the secret entrance behind him.

In the passage, a little way to the right, was a door low sunk in the wall. Sullivan put a call whistle to his lips and made a shrill, hideous noise.

Immediately the door fell back, and Roland found himself in a vault-like room with low roof. It was lighted with several brilliant, suspended oil lamps. It was carpeted with a thick crimson carpet, and furnished much as an ordinary dining-room, with a good leather suite and a handsome sideboard, on which glittered plate and crystal decanters filled with various wines.

Round the long table, covered with a crimson cloth, were seated about sixteen men of various ages and various ranks. All raised their hands in sign of welcome when the two young men entered.

It was not O'Hara's first visit to the secret meetings. A place was found for him at the table, and then the business of the evening was resumed.

The table was strewn with maps and documents of other kinds. Certain maps of certain towns were under discussion, and the best means of holding such, if necessary, against an opposing military force.

Roland was pale and silent. He sat with folded arms studying the various faces around him, yet he did not ask himself such questions as these:

"How many of these men were to be trusted? How many had joined the society from noble motives?"

There was a sprinkling from most European nations. Irishmen preponderated. Irishmen of all types—the nobly formed, dark-complexioned Celt, with straight, dusky hair, clearly chiselled features, eyes burning with enthusiasm, lips eloquent with high flown praises of his country and angry denunciations of its oppressors.

There were fair complexioned, bearded men, big and burly, with great words and loud voices. Of this class was O'Flynn, and there were others eager, lean, ferret-eyed, shabby in attire, men of few words, but prompt action; men whose hatred of the Saxon was intense and deep as life; men ready to burn a town or put a population to the sword without scruple and without reserve.

Besides Irishmen, there were Russians, Poles, Italians, and Frenchmen seated round that table in the secret chamber under the "Rose Tavern."

There was a Russian, bald as an orange and as yellow, with a face wrinkled like an ape's. He had wicked, leering eyes, that would have frightened a timid child or nervous woman. He was lean and long, very well clad, with a great diamond blazing on his knotted forefinger.

He was, it was said, of noble birth, but he had been banished to Siberia, and had once worked in chains under the earth. He had in a capricious fit of mercy been set at liberty, but his estates were confiscated, his wife and infant son were dead.

In twelve years of absence from the gay world of St. Petersburg, all his friends had forgotten him. Only one remained true—his old withered, weak mother. She had preserved for him the family jewels, which form a great portion of the wealth of a Russian noble. She had supported herself by needlework, and now she returned to him as many rubies, emeralds, and diamonds as sold for three or four thousand pounds.

Soon afterwards she died, and then Koffman came to England with a heart filled by wrath—not only against the despotic government of his own country—but against all established rule wheresoever it existed.

This secret society under the "Rose Tavern" was not only a Fenian conspiracy. There flocked to its standard the discontented of all nations. The most daring schemes were planned that night. Roland was chosen as the messenger for Ireland. He was to stir up the inhabitants of the towns. He was to write and have printed and distributed inflammatory poems.

He was to organise an attack on Donnamore Castle, which was to be sacked and burned to the ground. Grand things were promised him in return—gold and name and position.

Despite his extreme youth, his talent, his courage, and his enthusiasm commanded the admiration of the others. To him it seemed nothing dreadful that he should destroy the noble country home of the girl he loved. He had come to regard Donnamore as a species of Bastille, which frowned on all the country and crushed and oppressed all the people.

He dreamed of rising to power, of protecting the defenceless Elaine, of making her his bride in the sunshine and glory of his victory. Vain, mad, ambitious dreamer! He was only one among hundreds at that time of excitement of which we write.

Some things were said at which he shuddered, and cried: "No."

It was proposed by Koffman, in his distinctly pronounced English, that the attack on Donnamore should be deferred until Lady Donnamore

and her daughters were there in July next, and that the "woman tyrant" and her agent Foster should be each condemned as traitors and tyrants, and shot through the heart.

"No murder!" cried Roland. "Our laurels must not be stained with the blood of the helpless!"

Cheers from most of those assembled—groans from a few. Roland sprang upon the table, and electrified the meeting with his fiery eloquence. He spoke of the starving mothers and ragged babes in green Ireland; of the oppression of the landowners; of the splendour and pride of the rich; of the abomination of taxes; of the cant that was preached to induce the poor to submit.

He ended by calling Heaven to witness from the depths of his warm young heart that he was ready and willing to pour out his life's blood in the service of his oppressed country. Loud cheers greeted him.

After this healths and toasts were drunk in good wine, but sobriety was the characteristic of the meeting, which separated silently and safely about three o'clock in the morning.

Roland crept wearied and exhausted into bed. The next day he was naturally a little languid and slow over his copying-work at the office, and was sharply called to order by his superiors.

That afternoon he took his way towards Belgrave Square with a heart filled by he knew not what strange and awful foreboding. Never had the splendid equipages of the rich, their pomp, their liveries, their magnificent horses, seemed to him to insult his poverty as on that cold, clear frosty afternoon.

He shivered. He was hungry; but in his pocket was nearly all the sum, Christine had lent him to buy clothes for the servants' party.

"I will pay to-night," he said to himself. Then he wondered if he should catch a glimpse of the Lady Elaine, and what she would say to him.

(To be Continued.)

THE HARBOUR'S BAE.

WHEN outward bound, all taut and trim,

No fear beguiles the sailor's heart;

His good ship is a home to him,

And yet he feels a lingering smart

At parting from those loved and dear.

He sees their hands waved from afar,

And brushes off the starting tear,

When waiting o'er the harbour's bar.

For well he knows his wife will view

Each vessel passing to and fro;

And watch for him with love so true,

And pray for him when harsh winds blow.

Then thoughts will gather in his mind

Of home and friends he left afar;

The lingering looks of those behind,

When passing o'er the harbour's bar.

How changed his thoughts when homeward bound,

With home and friends again in sight;

His heart is with the sweet hope bound,

Of making them all snug and right.

He sings a cheerful song once more,

'Neath morning sun or evening star;

Sweet wishes wait to her on shore,

When crossing o'er the harbour's bar.

O. P.

SCIENCE.

IMPROVED COPYING PENCILS.

THE pencils so far made to produce marks from which copies could be obtained in an ordinary copying press, had the disadvantage that, consisting of aniline principally, the colour of the copy faded very soon. Gustav Schwan-

hauser has overcome this difficulty by doing away with aniline altogether. He prepares the pencils as follows:

Ten lbs. of the best logwood are boiled repeatedly with 100 lbs. of water, and the decoction so obtained evaporated down to 100 lbs. The liquid is heated to the boiling point, and small quantities of nitrate of the oxide of chromium added, till the bronze coloured precipitate formed at first is redissolved in a deep, dark, blue colour. The liquid is now evaporated to the consistency of a syrup, and enough of the finest levigated fat clay is added to have one part of clay for every three or three and a half parts of the extract. To form a good mass to manipulate, a little mucilage of gum tragacanth may be used.

It must be observed, that the quantity of nitrate of chromium must be in the right proportion to the extract, as a surplus prevents an easy writing, and a deficiency prevents the easy solubility of the pencil mass for copying purposes. No other sort of chromium will answer the purpose, as they all crystallise, and the crystals formed in the mass will cause the pencil to be rough and brittle. Nitrate of chromium does not crystallise; its combination with the extract of logwood is the most easily soluble and the blackest ink.

The nitrate is prepared as follows: 20 lbs. of chromic alum are dissolved in 200 lbs. of boiling water. To the solution is gradually added a solution of carbonate of sodium of the same strength, till all the hydrated oxide of chromium has been precipitated. After subsidence of the precipitate the supernatant liquid is decanted and the precipitate washed with distilled water, till the filtrate does not contain any more traces of sulphate of potassium and sodium, as may be shown by the addition of a little solution of chloride of barium. To the precipitate collected on the filter are successively added small portions of heated pure nitric acid, previously diluted by its own volume of distilled water, in such quantity that on boiling a small quantity of the hydrated oxide remains undissolved.

In this way a perfectly saturated solution of nitrated oxide of chromium is obtained, containing no excess of nitric acid. This is a great advantage, since an addition of nitric acid to the ink changes its colour to a muddy red. Another advantage is, that no basic nitrate is formed, and no excess of hydrated oxide is contained in the produced salt, as it is the case in most all other salts of chromium. Such basic salts form an insoluble compound with the extract of logwood, instead of entering in solution. The writing furnished by these pencils is easily transferable; it is of a penetrating, jet black colour. Alkalies and acids are without any effect on the ink.

CLEOPATRA'S NEEDLE.

SOME fears have been expressed lest Cleopatra's Needle should tumble down. This famous obelisk, after being lost at sea on its way from Egypt, has at last been placed on a fine site; but its base is so small that it is said to suggest the idea of an egg standing on one end. Mr. John Dixon, the engineer who superintended its removal to England, says a wind pressure of one hundred and thirty pounds to the square foot would not upset it. Other engineers, however, believe that a pressure of eighty pounds would be too much for the obelisk to withstand; and there is evidence that the wind in Great Britain sometimes blows with a force equal to this.

In January, 1868, there was a tremendous gale at Liverpool, when the wind-registering instrument in the observatory there indicated a pressure of sixty pounds to the square foot, the maximum it was capable of recording; but the attending meteorologist was satisfied that the wind pressure actually rose much higher on this day—probably being several times between seventy and eighty pounds. Mr. Dixon is inclined to doubt the accuracy of the instruments yielding these results. Fifty-five pounds to the square foot is the highest pressure of wind ordinarily allowed for by engineers in England.



[THE FAREWELL AT THE GATE.]

FRINGED WITH FIRE.

By the Author of "Clytie Cranbourne," "The Golden Bowl," "Poor Loo," etc.

CHAPTER I.

"YOU DARE TO TOUCH ME?"

Mysterious love, uncertain treasure,
Hast thou more of pain or pleasure?
Endless torments dwell about thee,
Yet who would live and live without thee?

A WINDY, stormy evening. The sun is sinking low in the distant west. Great masses of dark clouds, having their edges fringed as if with fire, are piled up like giant mountains—mountains which the eye can see, but which human foot can never tread.

The fields look green and fresh this stormy evening, though they are somewhat bare, for it is early spring. The Severn rushes past impatient to reach the sea, and a girl just in her first womanhood paces restlessly to and fro by the hurrying stream.

More than once she has consulted her watch, and an expression of disappointment and vexation clouds her fair face from time to time as she draws her cloak more closely round her to exclude the searching wind.

"Arthur is late, and he knows I hate to be kept waiting," she says, in half audible tones. "It is his last night, and yet I feel half inclined to go home and leave him to follow me. Charlie never kept me waiting like this; but, then, after all, Charlie was as false as Jason. False! No, I won't use strong words; it does no good. He is rich now, and we are poor. No doubt he has forgotten me, while my Arthur is worth ten thousand of him, and I know Arthur loves me well; but I do wish he would not keep me wait-

ing like this. I am not an angel in the way of good temper, and he knows it."

With which, and an impatient shake of the head, she again resumed her sentry-like walk to and fro on the narrow pathway.

Three minutes later she is clasped in her lover's arms, as he says:

"My own love, my darling, I have kept you waiting, but I could not help it. A man met with an accident—was thrown from his horse. There was no surgeon near, and I stayed to do what I could to help him. I know that is what my darling would have had me do."

"Of course it is, Arthur, but I was working myself up into such a bad temper about it. Do you know I sometimes think you will be sorry when you have married me? I'm not half so good or so nice as you think me, and you are risking too much. I really and truly think I am not worth it. Do you, now?"

The answer to this was an embrace that for the minute silenced her, and her next observation was a kind of protest, as with blushing cheeks and downcast eyes she said:

"Oh, Arthur!"

"That is what you will get every time you try to persuade me to give you up," he said, with a protecting kind of masterfulness. "You know," he went on, more seriously, "I would rather give up my life than lose you, therefore you need never expect to get rid of me. You are mine, my own, for ever and ever."

"And I am more than satisfied to be so," was the confiding answer, "only I sometimes fear you may regret it, and blame me in after years for not having been firmer in putting this happiness away from me."

As she said this she looked up into his eyes with such love and trust expressed in her sweet face that no wonder the young man felt as if rank and wealth—nay, life itself were nothing to give up in exchange for the joy of possessing such a woman.

"I shall have nothing to blame you for, my darling, except for being so cold, and doubting yourself and me so persistently. And you will

have to wait three whole years for me, Florry. Do you think you will be true and faithful and patient so long?"

"Yes, dear, but I shall be glad when it is over. I shall miss you so dreadfully. Three years is such a long, long time."

"It is, my love. But I shall run down and see you as often as I can, and your father told me that perhaps you would go to London to live. If you were to I should see you every day."

"Papa is always talking of doing something or going somewhere," said the girl, with a dash of petulance in her tone and manner. "If you had heard as much of it as I have, Arthur, you would know how much value to put upon such haphazard projects."

The young man did not reply, for the girl's tone jarred him; and yet he knew that what she said was true.

Her father was apt to make rambling assertions or express his intention to do this, that, and the other thing, while he had never the power, even if he had the inclination, to carry half his projects into practice.

"Then, my love, what would you like me to do?" he asked, seriously. "If you say 'don't go' I will remain, though it will take away our only hope of being independent of assistance from my father. But you shall decide; my life and happiness are in your hands."

"Dear Arthur, you are far too good for me; of course I will wait for you, and you shall go and work hard in your profession, and I will write to you every day, and be patient and cheerful for your sake, and when the three years are over, and you have been called to the Bar, whether your father relents or not, I will be yours. I'm not afraid to be a poor man's wife, Arthur."

"I know you are not, my darling, but I hope we shall not be poor at the end of that time, and now, Florry, have you anything more to say to me before I leave you? I start early in the morning, you know, and I don't believe you have given me one kiss."

"I think you helped yourself to a good many," was the blushing reply.

And then the lovers wandered on by the river's side, talking as all lovers do and will do to the end of time. Night was drawing on. They had so much to say to each other. "Parting was such sweet sorrow," and they had reached Florence Edgecombe's home, a pretty cottage by the riverside, before half of what was in the heart of each had been whispered to the other.

"Will you come in and see papa," the girl asked, as they paused at the garden gate.

"No. I met him in the town to-day, and said good-bye to him then. I don't know how to part from you, Florry. I feel as though I were leaving the best part of myself and my life behind me. You will be true to me, my own love, won't you?"

"Yes, Arthur, as true as the earth is to the sun; as true as the needle to the pole; in life and in death, I will be yours and yours only."

A long clinging kiss sealed this promise—another and yet another, and then the hands unclasp as he turns away, while she opens the cottage door and enters, closing it behind her, and feeling almost as though she had shut out all the happiness and joy of her life in the action.

She is in no mood to speak to anyone. Her father's questions will fret and irritate her, so she walks up quietly to her own room, ostensibly to take off her hat and cloak, but really to think over her lover's perfections and the pain which his absence will cause her.

The one solitary candle she has lighted shows us a girl of some two and twenty summers, tall and largely made, one that for size and figure alone would have been called a fine woman, independent of the rare beauty of her face.

Her hair was of a light yellow-brown, not golden, but only a few shades removed from it, and grew in great abundance; coil after coil of it being wound round her large though well-shaped head, and looking really wonderful when loosened and hanging like a mantle around her.

Mr. Edgecombe, her father, being disappointed with his daughter in many ways, used to say "that nature had given her hair instead of intellect, and the substitute was a worthless one."

With her brown hair she has changing hazel eyes—sometimes dark almost to blackness, and at others a bright yellow, just as the feelings and surroundings of the moment affect her spirits.

It is no common every-day style of beauty that she possesses, for her features, though large, are finely and clearly out; the nearly straight eyebrows deeper by many shades than the colour of her hair; the slightly arched nose, which gives a certain proud, almost aristocratic expression and character to her face; the sweet ripe, yet pure and refined looking lips, that part in smiles over teeth that are white, even and spotless as pearls; and the sharply cut chin, in which there is as much of firmness as of beauty, make up a face which boasts of a complexion warm and white—too white indeed—if an occasional rosy flush did not come to brighten it.

She wore a dress of some grey woollen material, plainly made, but fitting her fine figure admirably, and with the exception of a heavy pair of gold earrings and a turquoise and diamond ring, both of them presents from Arthur Wardour, she wore no ornaments, a linen collar, fastened carelessly with a knot of blue ribbon, being all that relieved the dull grey colour of her dress.

Her own fair reflection in the glass does not attract her. She is looking at the ring upon her finger—her engagement ring—and turning it round and round she kisses it passionately, as though she would willingly send the same warm tokens of love to the giver.

A knock at the door is followed by the entrance of Mercy, the one maid-servant of the establishment, who, not being at this moment on very good terms with herself or anyone else, grimly announces:

"Master wants you!" and retreats downstairs more noisily than she had ascended them.

Not noticing the abruptness of the message or the rudeness of the manner, being well accustomed to that sort of thing perhaps, Florence Edgecombe gave one glance at herself in the glass from habit, rather than vanity or that she cared very much how she looked at present, and then, taking the candle in her hand, went down to her father.

It was not really until she was in the room, and in his sight, that she was conscious of the presence of another person as well as her parent, and then the faint colour left her face for an instant to rush back again, dyeing face and neck deep crimson.

Only for a few seconds, however, then with a determined effort of will, she recovers her self-command, and turning from her father, bows coldly to the visitor.

He will not be received in this manner, however. He approaches her and holds out his hand, saying:

"How wonderfully you have improved, Florence; let me congratulate you. I could not pass through Worcester without coming to see you and your father."

Very coldly, and with evident reluctance, the girl gave him her hand, scarcely letting him touch hers before she drew it away again, and then, retreating as far from him as the small room would permit, she sat down, taking up a piece of embroidery which had been left unfinished, and began to busy herself with a needle.

Mr. Edgecombe begins to talk, but his daughter scarcely knows what he is saying; her own mind is in a chaotic whirl; mechanically she plies her needle, stitching away the more intently the more she finds her thoughts and feelings difficult to analyse.

Three years ago, and that man had the power to play on the chords of her life as though she had been a musical instrument made to vibrate to his every touch.

But this was in the past, and in the past only she told herself. The spell which he had woven about her was broken; so at least she thought and hoped and believed; and yet the echo of its bygone music seemed to surge up into her heart now, and make her almost doubt if she had been true to herself, and true to the man whose wife she had promised to be, in that she had accepted the new love without telling him of the existence of the old.

She gave no evidence of these conflicting thoughts, however; she only worked on industriously, never raising her eyes to the face of the visitor if she could help it, answering his questions in monosyllables, and yet conscious that he was greedily devouring every expression of her face and every motion of her body, as he sat and gazed upon her.

"The world has greatly changed with both of us," he was saying. "When last I saw you I was going to China, but my brother's death and the fortune he left me saved me from that necessity, and when I returned to London after attending to the complicated affairs of my late brother, it was to find you had gone away from the metropolis, and it was some time before I discovered where you were."

"Of course it took you two years to do so," said Florence, looking up at him at last with her dark eyes flashing; "and it really was not worth so much trouble," she added, scornfully; "for papa and I had quite forgotten your existence."

"Speak for yourself, Florry," remarked her parent; "my memory is not so short."

"At any rate I had not forgotten you," observed the gentleman, blandly.

"So it appears," was the indifferent reply, as she again devoted all her attention to her work.

"You'll stay and spend the evening with us?" said Mr. Edgecombe, who not only was fond of company, but thought it prudent to be civil to his wealthy visitor.

"I shall be delighted to do so," was the reply, "especially if Miss Florence will favour us with some of her old songs."

Florence made no reply at the moment, but

when Charles Rentroll a little later again preferred the same request, she answered briefly that she was not inclined to sing or play that evening.

A suggestion about cards met with the same refusal, and she began to plead a headache, a woman's unfailing resource, as an excuse for retiring, when the door of the room in which they were was violently flung open, and a monkey leapt into the apartment, followed closely by Mercy, the servant.

"Jocko, you come here!" said the young woman, in an emphatic manner. "Dick shall have you if you don't come, you naughty, wicked brute!"

But Jocko, naturally indifferent to threats or reproaches, sprang into Florence's lap, and began, in a pitiful and confiding manner, to show her his head, back and arms, upon which were several small though painful wounds.

"Poor creature. Who has been treating it like this?" asked the young lady, indignantly, as she laid her hand tenderly upon the poor animal's head.

"It's that Dick's work," replied Mercy, stolidly. "If ever a fellow was born to be hung, it's that Dick Duster, though mother says he is my own brother. He hates Jocko, and Jocko hates him; don't you, Jock?"

As though fully understanding the question, the poor little caricature of humanity showed his teeth and exhibited every sign of ferocity. Then, calming down, he began to whimper like an ill-used child, again pitifully showing his injuries, and looking wistfully up for sympathy.

"You can go, Mercy. I will bring Jocko into the kitchen directly," said the young lady; and then turning to her father, she added, with flushed cheeks:

"Really, papa, I do think it is your duty to have that cruel wretch prosecuted. To serve a dumb animal like this is simply brutal."

Mr. Edgecombe was about to grumble out some reply, when Charles Rentroll came to the girl's side, and bending down, examined the monkey's wounds.

"I will prosecute the man," he said, with some warmth, when he saw how the little creature had suffered. "You will allow me to take up the cudgels for Jocko, won't you, Florence?"

"Yes, gladly!" she answered, with her face flushed and her eyes sparkling, "because you will carry it out, and papa would only threaten the man."

Then she paused, catching her breath as though to recall her words, remembering to whom and of whom she was speaking.

"You are quite welcome to be the monkey's champion," remarked Mr. Edgecombe. "I don't care to be mixed up with such matters. I'll go and fetch that book I was telling you about." And so saying he left the room.

"Florence, why are you so cold to me?" asked Charles Rentroll, taking the girl's hand as her father closed the door. "You don't give me a chance of explaining the past," he went on. "Come, let us kiss and be friends, as we once were. You used to love me, Florry."

"And now I love someone else," replied the girl, coldly, trying to withdraw her hand.

"I don't believe it. You only say it to provoke me. You cannot have forgotten all we have been to each other. No man can be to you what I have been."

"I hope not," was the reply, while an expression of sarcasm, almost of hatred, came over her lovely face. "If I thought any man under the sun had the power to make me suffer as you have done, I would abjure your sex for ever, but we need never revert to this subject again, my love for you is dead; it is altogether a thing of the past, never to be revived, and you see, I wear another man's ring."

And she showed it him, trying at the same time to withdraw her right hand, which he still held in his own.

"For all that you are mine, and always will be," he said, determinedly, and he bent down, forcibly to kiss her.

This was too much for Florence; her lips, which little more than an hour ago had been pressed by Arthur Wardour in a parting kiss, to be defiled by this man, who was unworthy to breathe the same air, the idea stung her, and she threw back her head, defiance rather than fear in her face, as she said:

"You dare to touch me?"

The action startled the monkey also, and with the unreasoning courage or ferocity of its kind, it sprang at Rentroll, and fixed its sharp teeth firmly in his hand.

To loosen Florence's hand and shake the creature off, was but the work of an instant, but by this time Mr. Edgecombe's step was heard outside the door, and his daughter's persecution for the time was at an end.

The monkey's teeth, however, had cut deep into the flesh of Charles Rentroll's hand, and he will carry the scar with him to his death-bed, though strangely enough that very mark will save him from an unmerited doom and a premature grave.

CHAPTER II.

"I'LL BE EVEN WITH YOU FOR THIS!"

Man's love is of man's life a part;
The woman's whole existence.

DICK DUSTER, Mercy's brother, whom she charitably considered had been born for the sole purpose of being hanged, was a heavy, clownish looking young man of some three or four and twenty.

A gardener by trade, he had the reputation of being the most ill-natured, cruelly-disposed lout in the neighbourhood.

Stories of his senseless brutality were numerous enough. He kept mice and rats in cages, it was said, to starve them. He caught birds and burnt their eyes out, or otherwise tortured them to death.

A cat seldom escaped him unhurt; he had kept a dog, and so ill-used the poor animal, that a young man, irritated at the sight of it, had first of all given the owner a sound thrashing, and then had taken the dog to his own home, daring Dick Duster to follow and claim him.

While enjoying this unenviable notoriety, Dick one day met a man carrying an organ and a monkey, the latter being evidently more than he could manage.

The Italian was not unkind to the animal, but nothing could tame or subdue the little creature.

In utter disdain for anything like clothing, he tore off bit by bit the dress which he was expected to wear, and instead of dancing on the top of the organ, as it was his duty to do, he flew at his master's coat, tore first the collar, then the sleeve with his teeth and claws, and behaved altogether like the very incarnation of spite and mischief.

This sight delighted Dick; here was something for him to subdue and amuse himself with, and though five shillings was a very serious consideration to him, he paid it without much grumbling for master Jocko, taking him back to his mother's cottage in triumph. From that time poor Jocko's life was anything but an easy one.

He hated his own sex in any race or species, with a fine persistent hatred, which no amount of flattery, coercion or severity could mitigate. Whenever Dick approached him, if he had the chance, he would fly at his hand and bite it, at his leg, at his throat, at anything to show his hatred and detestation.

He would not take food from his hand, indeed I believe he would have rather starved, and poor creature, he would have died from hunger if Mrs. Duster, or Chatty, as she was more commonly called, had not, in her son's absence, fed the miserable little wretch.

It was but natural that in such encounters, even with a less inhuman master, poor Jocko should get the worst of it, and more than once Dick Duster tried to kill the intractable rebel. But Jocko seemed endowed with as many lives as a cat.

Neither was he quite without friends. In a measure he atoned for his hatred for his own sex by a more amiable bearing towards the fairer half of creation. He was friendly with Mrs. Duster, and more particularly so with Mercy when she came home, as she usually did two or three times a week.

Mercy liked the monkey; she liked it more particularly because her brother hated it, and she had brought it in her arms to Jasmine Cottage several times and shown it to her young mistress, who was even more indignant than herself at the cruel treatment it suffered, while Jocko himself, fickle as the rest of his sex, quickly transferred his affections from Mercy to Florence, and though he was never known to bite a girl or a woman, he clung to the young lady and refused to be taken from her, with a tenacity which was almost enough to frighten her.

He was a wise monkey in his way; he never seemed to forget a place he had once been in, and whenever he could escape from Dick Duster's cottage, which was seldom, for he was usually chained up, he invariably made a call upon the Edgecombes.

As Jocko plays an important part in the story I have to narrate, I may be pardoned for giving so much of his past history.

Dick did not even know that the monkey had escaped, he had beaten it brutally, kicked it into a corner, and left it for dead, the poor creature having fainted.

After it recovered a little, it managed to slip its chain and get away to its friends, and its cruel master had not even looked into the corner of the cellar into which he had flung it, but had gone off the following morning to his work, careless or indifferent as to its fate.

It was rather a surprise to him, therefore, when about midday, the gentleman in whose garden he had been engaged to do a week's work came towards him, accompanied by two policemen; and his astonishment increased when they told him he must go with them at once before a magistrate who was then sitting in the Town-Hall.

At first he thought of showing fight, but it was evidently useless, and he was marched off to the police-court between his two guardians.

Here he was met by a gentleman whom he had never seen before, but who seemed to be the instigator of his arrest.

There, too, was Mr. Edgecombe and his daughter, the latter carrying Master Jocko in her arms, well wrapped up in a shawl to protect him from the cold.

For one moment Dick Duster thought the monkey had been gifted with the power of speech, and had come to accuse him, and though he dismissed the idea, he would scarcely have been wrong if it had been really so; for the poor animal, one mass of bruises and sores, was exhibited, a woman living next door to his mother's cottage swore to having seen him inflict some of the wounds, and then his general character for mean, pitiful cruelty was deposed to by several witnesses, and he was remanded till the next morning, in order to give him a chance of calling witnesses to refute the evidence against him.

But the next morning brought further confirmation, and Dick Duster was sentenced to imprisonment for six months with hard labour, during which time he might study the advantages of kindness and mercy.

After hearing his sentence, Dick asked the name of his prosecutor, the strange gentleman he had noticed, that day and the one before it.

"Mr. Charles Rentroll," said someone.

"Thank you, Mr. Rentroll; I'll be even with you for this," he observed, in a tone loud enough for the man he addressed to hear, and then he was taken out of court.

As there was no one to claim the monkey after Dick was sent to prison, Florence, to her father's great disgust, decided to keep it herself, and a veterinary surgeon was even consulted as to the best way of healing its wounds.

Charles Rentroll had found some very good opportunities for winning back Florence's affec-

tion for her old love, but without achieving the success he anticipated.

Arthur Wardour had gone to London to fight the battle of life for her sake. She received letters from him daily, wrote back as often in return, and this constant interchange of thought and feeling, even though the lovers were divided by distance, left no loophole for any other sentiment or any feeling of regret to assert itself.

Rentroll was puzzled and baffled, and therefore the more positively resolved to succeed. He never valued anything that was won easily, and he now determined to try the effect of a little judicious rivalry.

To do this, it was necessary to be on the spot, and, having little to do but follow the devices of his own heart, he determined to secure something like permanent quarters near the Edgecombes, and run down as often as he pleased from London, or any part of the country where he might be, staying a few days at a time just as he felt disposed.

When Florence heard of this arrangement, a curious sensation of danger and pain came over her. Was she constantly to be subject to this man's attentions and persecutions, and Arthur away too, while busy watchful eyes, instigated by his parents and her enemies, were taking note of all she said and did? Should she tell Arthur the story of her life before she met him?

That was what she ought to have done at first. She could have told him now, but to write it was so very different. More than once she tried, but the words looked so cold and harsh on paper, and seemed to mean something so very different from what she intended to express, that she gave up the task in despair, tore the letter to pieces, and began a fresh one, leaving out all mention of Charles Rentroll, except as an "old friend of papa's," who had helped to punish Dick Duster for his ill-treatment of the monkey.

She must mention his name of course, for he might read the case in a newspaper, or hear of it from another quarter, but she could not, though she tried so hard, tell him that tale of the past that was connected with it. Thus she drifted on blindly to the millstone that threatened to engulf her.

It was the third day after her parting with Arthur Wardour that Florence went to call upon her friend and confidante, Clara Cousins.

Clara was a particularly pretty girl; the only child of a surgeon who had lost his wife many years before, and whose household, together with himself and his daughter, were regulated, or supposed to be, by his deceased wife's sister. This lady tried hard to rule them all, but she found one of her subjects particularly unmanageable.

"Oh, I am so glad you have come, Florence," exclaimed Miss Cousins, dancing about delightedly. "Auntie has been so cross, I didn't know what to do with her, and I should have taken refuge with you, only I heard you had visitors, so I didn't like to intrude; but come now, you'll go for a jolly long walk with me, won't you?"

"Yes, I came for that purpose. It seems to me that ill-usage agrees with you capitally, Clara, for you are looking as bright as anybody can look. Tell your aunt you won't be back to dinner. I want you to come and spend the whole day with me."

"Yes, that will be jolly, and I'll tell you a secret, Florence. I am going to have my fortune told."

"Nonsense, Clara. You surely don't believe in such rubbish?" remarked Florence, severely.

"I can't say that I exactly believe in it," returned Clara, putting her head on one side, and looking for all the world, with her small figure, black eyes and hair, and rosy cheeks, like some wise little bird; "but it's great fun, you know, whether one believes it or not, and I'm going to have it told."

"And who is going to unveil the future for you?" asked Florence, half scornfully.

"You won't tell?"

"No, certainly not."

"Well, Chatty Duster, the dressmaker. She's

coming here to make some dresses to-morrow, and I'm going to get aunt out of the way for a time, and then she will tell me my fortune. She's a regular witch, you know, at telling fortunes."

"Is she really?"

The question is asked more in satire than in earnest.

"Yes, indeed she is. She told Annie Somers how she would lose the lover she then had, and marry someone else within a year; and it all came true. And she told Kitty Williams how she would have some money left her, and how a letter would come from a dark man, and lots of other things that I don't remember. But they all happened."

"I don't suppose it matters much; but I didn't know Chatty was a fortune-teller."

"Oh, she keeps it very secret, because, you know, the police might interfere with her; but she is going to tell me mine while she is here at work, and she will only charge half-a-crown. I wonder what she'll tell!"

"I should tell you to keep the money in your pocket, and not waste it in that way," replied Florence, in her matter-of-fact tone; "but come along. The morning is slipping away, and I have lots of things to do before dinner. I dare say we shall have that Mr. Rentroll in during the evening."

"Oh, I have heard of this Mr. Rentroll. Who is he, and what is he like?"

"He is an old friend of papa's. He has been called to the Bar, and was going out to take some appointment in China when his brother died and left him a great fortune. Now he spends his time and money in amusing himself."

"Yes, but what is he like?" queried Clara.

"Like any other man, I suppose," was the careless rejoinder. "He is something over five-and-thirty, not very tall, has jet black hair and eyes, a moustache, and small Dundreary whiskers, and I have heard people say he wears stays, his figure is so good, and that, I think, is a pretty complete list of his attractions."

"I wish I were like you, Florence," remarked her friend, with a sigh. "Everybody seems to fall in love with you, while I never had a lover in my life except that Dick Duster with his impudence."

"Dick Duster!" repeated Florence, in amazement. "Surely you never allowed a man like that to speak to you?"

"Of course not; but papa engages him to do up the garden sometimes, you know, and one day he brought me when he was leaving work a beautiful bunch of flowers. I didn't like to refuse them, and while I had them in my hand he had the impudence to put his arm round my waist. I was in such a fury that I flung the flowers at him, and vowed I would tell papa. Of course I didn't, but he has never dared to look at me since."

"The impertinent fellow! but you will have enough lovers in time, Clara. Remember, you are only nineteen, while I am twenty-three. Four years make a good deal of difference."

"Perhaps they do; but about this Mr. Rentroll. Is he engaged, do you know?"

"I really don't know. I shouldn't consider him a very safe man to flirt with, for your own sake. He is here to-day, and may not turn up again for the next seven years. One can never be sure of him, though he is decidedly clever and fascinating."

And as she said this a vision of the past came up before the girl's mind; of the intoxicating love with which this man had once inspired her; of the intense happiness which had once been hers; of the misery and agony which followed the long, weary nights in which there was no rest, no sleep; in which she tossed about with a tearless, wordless load of grief upon her heart, wondering if the pain that racked her would ever cease.

And then the long, long days in which she sat and waited and watched and hoped, until hope first grew dim and then died out, and despair settled down upon her soul.

All this was over now, but the recollection of her sufferings would never fade away, and she

longed, if it were possible, to save her friend from ever knowing what such suffering was.

The possibility of this happening had not crossed her mind when she asked Clara to spend the rest of the day with her, but now, when it did so, she began to wonder how she could prevent their meeting, and how she could either send Clara back to her own home or keep Charles Rentroll from calling upon them that evening.

Vain thought, however, the fates were against her, for turning out of the main road into a lane which led to the river, who should they almost run against, but the subject of her anxious meditation himself.

"I was just coming up to see your father, Miss Florence," he said, lifting his hat to the two girls.

And then, of course, there was nothing for Florence to do but introduce her two friends, adding that her father was, she believed, at home. But Mr. Rentroll was in no hurry to leave two such pretty girls.

"I'll call this evening instead, if you will allow me to accompany you in your walk," he said, and though Florence would have liked to refuse the request, Clara looked so delighted, and he so eager, that she felt it would be betraying too much feeling on the subject to say no; so she coldly observed that he could come with them if he liked, and then she walked on, looking into the hedges, picking an occasional primrose and leaving the principal part of the conversation to be carried on by her companions.

Florence Edgecombe vowed to herself that her love for Charles Rentroll had died a natural death, and that he was now nothing to her, but for all that, a sharp pain pricked her sorely when she found how easily he was attracted and amused by Clara's light, almost silly chatter, and that the smiles and glances which he had vainly prayed for from herself, could be so easily obtained elsewhere.

Suffering had given her strength, however. During the last two years she had acquired great self-command, and whether she suffered or not, she gave no outward sign of it; on the contrary, she picked a handful of wild flowers, and in answer to a question, said she was going to send some of them to Arthur; smiled and laughed and jested when any remark was specially addressed to her, but otherwise left the other two to talk together, piquing Rentroll by her indifference into being more impressive and complimentary to Clara than he would have been, and making her honestly wonder how Florence could prefer Arthur Wardour to this highly polished gentleman and man of the world, as was evidently the case, while she herself felt as though she had never known how charming one of the stronger sex could be to a pretty girl, until now.

Thus the first link in the chain was forged that was to lead to such disastrous results. Florence reached home, dissatisfied with herself and everyone else. Clara was in a state of sentimental intoxication, saying little, but dreaming and imagining all the more, while Rentroll, smiling at the chance afforded him, determined to amuse himself with Clara, and pique Florence into a fit of jealousy, then he would throw the little girl over and snatch his old love from the man who in his absence had had the presumption to win her, and as for Clara and the deserted lover—well, they must look out for themselves.

Such was his plan; such his determination; of course, circumstance and accident would frame themselves to his desire; he would say to the floods and tempests of passion and love, "Thus far shalt thou go and no farther," and they must perforce obey him, as though such feelings ever obeyed mortal man yet, or ever will while human hearts exist and throb.

But he recked not of consequences. He had his own aim and purpose to accomplish, other people must take care of themselves, and thus he drifted on to the rocks and quicksands from whence there was no return.

(To be Continued.)

THE CRAFTY HERMIT CRAB.

THERE are many species of hermit crabs, those of the tropics being the largest and handsomest. This odd creature inhabits the shell of some mollusc in which it can bury its unprotected tail and into which it can retreat when threatened with danger. It usurps the deserted home of various molluscs, according to its size. When young and small it is found in the shells of the tops, periwinkles, and other small molluscs; and when it reaches full age it takes possession of the whelk shell and entirely fills the cavity.

The crafty hermit crab is found in the Mediterranean, and among other shells which it inhabits, the variegated triton is known to be a favourite. The crabs are supposed to fight for the shell.

A RUSSIAN HERO; OR, Marko Tyre's Treason.

CHAPTER VII.

ABOUT ten miles southeast of St. Petersburg, on one of the numerous confluent of the Neva, there stood at the period of which we write—a hundred years ago—one of the finest residences to be found in Russia. It was known as the Sabielin Palace.

History, antiquity, and a long line of princely families, had all combined to confer upon the premises imperishable renown.

The place had its tragic histories and traditions, its haunted nooks and corners, its reminiscences of battle and siege, its vicissitudes, its annals of glory and power, and its record of decline, the mutations of human affairs having written their inevitable scars upon it.

The mansion was spacious and well-furnished yet a little rambling and incongruous in style, having been built piecemeal, and a little antiquated and worn in its furniture and other appointments.

The surrounding grounds were not only ample, but picturesque, their aspects being finely variegated with wood and water, as well as with rusticity and cultivation, and presenting a perfect maze of drives, walks, lawns, and gardens.

The adjacent fields were one mass of verdure, dotted here and there with numerous cottages of serfs, yet they bore, like the gardens of the palace, many signs of neglect and decay, as if the glory and enterprise and taste of the ancient house had suffered an eclipse.

Here dwelt periodically—a portion of each summer—the owner of the estate, the Countess Sabielin, a widow of many years' standing, her husband, the Count Sabielin, having died suddenly and mysteriously not long after his marriage.

The Countess Sabielin was a strange and sinister woman, even in that world of strange and sinister beings which is called Russia. She had the appearance of an animated mask, and seemed a living skeleton in silks and jewels.

Her age was known to be less than forty, but there were few ladies in Russia who looked older, although she was as strong and nerveful as a tigress.

Her skin resembled a piece of badly tanned leather, and lay in ridges in all the depressions of her features.

Her teeth had all been consumed by medicine or poison, and she had been rendered bald by illness.

Her fingers resembled the claws of a bird of prey. The lustre of her eyes was strangely and painfully suggestive of unquiet and dissatisfaction.

Her lips seemed as sharp as the edges of a pair of shears, and as thin as wafers. It would

have been lawful to doubt the existence of her veins, so cadaverous was her frame, so dry and hard was her touch, so cold and stony her gaze.

And yet the Countess Sabielin was one of the historic notabilities of Russia. She had come into notoriety sixteen years before, as one of the daring intriguantes who had materially contributed to the elevation of Catherine the Second to the throne, and had for years thereafter resided more or less at court, as one of the sovereign's ladies of honour.

It was generally known that she still enjoyed the confidence of Catherine, but that she had for several years seemed fond of retirement, hardly leaving her estates, even in the depths of winter.

The reputation of the countess was undeniably bad, she being regarded by all who knew her as one of the most revengeful and unscrupulous of women.

She lived enveloped in a great deal of mystery, made strange journeys, had strange visitors, did strange things, and was altogether a puzzle even to those who were the most intimate with her, as well as a subject of some of the darkest rumours it is possible to utter. In more than one household—where special facts or circumstances had made her known—her name was a synonym for all that is false, mysterious, threatening or atrocious.

It was whispered that she had committed several murders, either with her own hands or by the hands of hired assassins, and that her own husband had been among the number of her victims.

After the empress, there was just one person who seemed appreciative of the Countess Sabielin.

This one person was her sole surviving nephew and presumptive heir, Colonel Girgas Dal, the imperial favourite, the unwelcome suitor of Roda Gradowsky.

The colonel resided habitually with his aunt when not engaged in active service, and she had for years supplied him with money, although somewhat crippled in her resources, thus enabling him to render himself popular and esteemed in the higher walks of Russian society.

He was, in fact, her idol and her pet. She not only had great hopes of his future, but counted upon his assistance for the realisation of her own projects.

It need not be supposed, however, from the description we have given of the Countess Sabielin, that the hideousness of her body and soul prevented her from being one of the most noted and popular of entertainers. The great magnates of the land esteemed it an honour to be upon visiting terms with her. Her receptions were crowded, and her dinner-parties occasions long to be remembered. She was known to have had many offers of marriage, and it had been a source of public wonder that she had always refused them.

Her dogs, horses, and diamonds were everywhere noted.

She had resided in all the great centres of civilisation, spoke several languages, and had figured with equal success in politics and fashion.

And yet she was known to be a soured and disappointed woman, as mysterious as she was terrible and dreaded.

In one of the spacious drawing-rooms of her princely abode, the countess was pacing to and fro with an anxiously thoughtful countenance, occasionally addressing a remark to a favourite maid, but more often looking impatiently from one of the front windows, and at times fixing a keen glance upon the public road that passed at no great distance.

The evening had set in with such agreeable zephyrs from the south that the countess had lingered in her gardens until long after night-fall, and even yet the windows were all open, admitting the fragrance of the sea of flowers that occupied all the vast lawn between the road and the dwelling.

"What a gilded mockery is everything around me!" she reflected, bitterly. "Every foot of these

grounds—every timber in this residence—is mortgaged for more than it would bring in the market! I am virtually a beggar!"

A dark figure suddenly presented itself to her gaze under one of the front windows.

"Doctor Rubini!" cried the countess, recoiling.

For a moment, despite all her self-control, she looked as if she had seen the master of evil.

"Yes, Countess—as you see!"

As he made this response, the new-comer laid hold of the railing of a balcony, and drew himself upwards into the apartment.

He was a small, thin-featured man, with a black eye and low, retreating forehead, a closely-cropped head, a smoothly-shaven face, and a frame that was evidently wiry and strong. His accent showed that he was an Italian.

He was a physician who had been nearly a score of years domiciled in Russia, where his affairs had prospered in a most wonderful manner.

Arriving with all his effects in a handkerchief, he had become the proprietor of several hotels in the capital, of an asylum for the insane, and of two or three immense establishments at popular summer resorts, so that, as was generally known, he had passed from a state of nothingness and obscurity to the renown of a millionaire.

"Why are you here again so soon, Doctor Rubini?" asked the countess, with a cold, angry glance.

"I have come for more money."

It would be difficult to describe the disagreeable smile, the cool insolence, the remorseless greed, with which the Italian delivered himself of this brief declaration as he looked the lady straight in the eyes. An impatient gesture escaped her.

"How did you come?" she asked, as she looked sharply in every direction from the window for signs of conveyance.

"I came on horseback—the roads are so bad—and brought a groom with me—for company. He is now with the horses at the corner of your estates, impatiently awaiting the return of his master."

The countess looked as if there were several points that annoyed her in this brief communication. But she forced herself to be calm, and even assumed an air of apparent indifference.

"Of course, I am not prying into your affairs, Doctor Rubini," she said. "I was only wondering at not seeing a horse or vehicle. Please be seated."

The Italian complied, the satisfied expression of his features deepening.

The lady sat down near him, visibly nerving herself for a struggle.

"Let's see and realise just what our relations are, Dr. Rubini," said the countess, in a voice husky with excitement, after assuring herself that they were alone. "Nearly twenty years ago you made your escape from Italy, after committing an atrocious murder—"

She paused, gasping for breath as if suffocated by the mountain of iniquity she had set about moving.

"Pardon me, Countess. The recollection is unpleasant to you," said the Italian, in a soft, calm voice. "Permit me. Arriving here from Italy, under the circumstances you have so graciously recalled, I made your acquaintance, as of many other beautiful and refined ladies. You and your husband were not living in the sweetest of intelligence and harmony at that time, and you called upon me for one of those subtle poisons which have from time immemorial been one of the delights of my countrymen. I complied with your demands—who could refuse you anything?—and the Count Sabielin perished!"

The countess looked up quickly, angrily.

"And from that day to this," she said, in a hard, anguished voice, "you have been preying upon me!"

"Excuse me, signora!—from that day to this I have not only been your devoted servant, but constantly in your service. Thus, when it be-

came your wish to remove Mrs. General Gradowsky from the world, you naturally thought of your friend Rubini, and as naturally found me willing and able to render you the desired service.

"Watching my chance, I knocked the lady on the head and tumbled her into the river one evening as she was returning from one of her charity visits, and from that hour to this not a trace of her has appeared to annoy you or to enlighten her husband!"

"Villain; you know you did not murder Lady Gradowsky!" returned the countess, with an irrepressible burst of fear and excitement.

"You saved her alive, with the intention of robbing her and her husband of their fortune after you have stripped me of mine!"

"Why, what an idea!" murmured Doctor Rubini, as calmly as if he had been discussing the phases of the moon. "What a curious suspicion!"

"It is not a suspicion, sir; it is a fact," declared the Countess Sabielin, emphatically. "Now that I have learned your infernal nature, I know that you are not the man to have let slip such an opportunity of killing two birds with one stone! You did not kill Lady Gradowsky! At an early day I hope to have such proofs of this fact as will bury you in your awful infamy!"

"Caution, Countess! Don't let's use such ugly words! One of your servants, rendered curious by seeing me here so often, might be so indiscreet as to listen! Remember that we are both in one coffin, signora, if our matters ever come to publicity!"

"Well, then, to another matter! What have you done with General Gradowsky?"

"I, Countess? I know nothing whatever about the General Gradowsky! As I have told you so often heretofore, I had no hand in his disappearance. Why should I have had any? You never said a word to me about wishing to have him removed. On the contrary, you seemed only too anxious to force your society upon him and to brighten his solitude, and to pursue in every possible way the acquaintance you have so long had with him. I had nothing whatever to do with Gradowsky's strange disappearance. I cannot even guess what became of him. My theory is that he in some way gave offence to the government, and was seized and sent to Siberia. This theory at least has the merit of accounting for the secrecy with which the general vanished from among us."

"Fiend! I cannot know whether you are lying or not!" groaned the countess. "I only know that the disappearance of that man is the most horrible contrariety that could have possibly happened to me."

"Indeed?" murmured the Italian. "This is what you told me before, but are you really sincere in the declaration? If so, I must endeavour to solve the mystery of the general's disappearance. If you are much interested in the matter as you say, this will be a new mine for me to work. I have had a very hard task of late to extract money from you. You pretend to me that you are embarrassed. And yet I do not see as you have reorganised your household upon a more economical basis."

"How could I? Is not something due to appearances? Besides, at the least sign of crumbling, the whole edifice will go to pieces in a single night."

"Nevertheless I am in hopes that you will let me have ten thousand roubles this evening, Countess," said the Italian, sinking his voice to a gentle whisper. "I have ridden over expressly to obtain this amount. I shall have great need of that amount to-morrow."

"I cannot possibly let you have it, sir."

"Oh, very well! Don't distress yourself. I know where I may possibly obtain the sum," and the Italian arose. "Sundry documents in my possession could doubtless be turned to account—"

The countess interrupted him with a gesture of desperation.

"If you will let me alone a year," she murmured, "I will give you the sum you have mentioned."

"Ah! you have it at hand, then? But a year is an eternity. How can I tell what necessities and emergencies may arise within a year? Really, I cannot promise. But I will endeavour to be as reasonable as my circumstances will permit me to be. If you please, therefore—"

He finished with his most disagreeable smile, extending his hand.

The countess hesitated a moment, with a strange stare in her eyes, as if she were canvassing the possibilities of accomplishing the murder of the wretch before her. Then she stepped to an adjoining apartment and counted out the amount demanded.

"Many thanks, Countess," said the Italian, as she returned and gave him the money. "You oblige me greatly—you do indeed."

"Will you not have some refreshments before you go, Doctor Rubini?" asked the countess.

"Thank you—no! Good night, countess!"

And he vanished as he had come.

"The treacherous robber and cheat!" breathed the Countess Sabielin, as she ground her heel savagely into the carpet. "When and where shall I trap him? I could skin him alive! He has cost me more than a million of roubles. And yet I am convinced he is a traitor! I do not believe he killed Lady Gradowsky. She will yet turn up to plague me. This beast has cleaned me out completely. How can I fill up again? I'll have to see that old money-lender. Yes, my next resort is the Jew. At the very first opportunity I must call upon Misdrak!"

(To be Continued.)

SLEEP AS A MEDICINE.

THE cry for rest has always been louder than the cry for food. Not that it is more important, but that it is often harder to obtain. The best rest come from sound sleep. Of two men or women, otherwise equal, the one who sleeps the better will be the more healthy and efficient. Sleep will do much to cure irritability of temper, peevishness and uneasiness. It will restore vigour to an over-worked brain. It will build up and make strong a weak body. It will cure a headache. It will cure a broken spirit. It will cure sorrow. Indeed we might make a long list of nervous and other maladies that sleep will cure. The cure of sleeplessness requires a clean, good bed, sufficient exercise to promote weariness, pleasant occupation, good air, and not too warm a room; a clear conscience, and avoidance of all stimulants and narcotics. For those who are over-worked, haggard and nervous, who pass sleepless nights, we commend the adoption of such habits as will secure sleep; otherwise life will be shortened and, what there is of it, made sadly imperfect.

THE PRINCESS AND THE PAINTER.

A VERY pretty story is going the round of the studios about the Princess Royal and a young German painter of promise—Charles Salzmann by name. A boy of poor parentage, with genius for drawing and painting, Salzmann was taken into a painter's studio at Berlin, and painted a picture which attracted the attention of the Princess Imperial.

She bought the picture, found out the artist, and had a long conversation with him about art, in which, as you know, she is a dabbler herself.

The boy has a great talent for sea pieces; but was too poor to quit the studio, and the Princess finding out this, asked him if he would like to go to sea for a couple of years with her son. Of course he would, but he could not go for want of means.

The Princess of course was perplexed for a moment, because it was one thing to offer the lad a berth in the ship, and another to offer him

money for his outfit. But a happy thought struck her. He had some pictures still unsold on the walls of the Berlin Academy, and these the Princess and her friends purchased at once at prices which put an end to all *à la* difficulties, and Charles Salzmann, with his portfolio of sketches, is now on his way round the world with Prince Henry of Prussia as his companion de voyage. Thus, at least, is the story, and it is too characteristic of the thoughtful generosity of the Princess Royal to pass without observation.

TULA SILVER.

THE article manufactured under that name in Tula, Russia, is at present manufactured on a large scale by Zacher & Co., in Berlin, who succeeded in lifting the veil of the secret of its manufacture. Tula silver is a composition of 9 parts of silver, one part of copper, one part of lead, and one part of bismuth. These metals are melted together in the given proportions, and worked with as much sulphur as they may be able to take up. Thus a composition of a peculiar blue colour is obtained, which has on that account, in some places, been called blue steel.

STRONG TEMPTATION: A Tale of Two Sinners.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"That Young Person," "Why She Forsook Him," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XX.

THREE TETE-A-TETES.

Of all the truths I've learned in shame
The bitterest is that sin
Is at the best a losing game
To those who play and win.

ROSAMOND STUART did not have much opportunity of finding out what had so puzzled her very soon after the drive related in the last chapter.

The house in Park Lane was closed, and Mr. and Mrs. Hastings set out with their guest on the foreign trip from which Rosamond anticipated such pleasure.

If ever the number three ceased to be unlucky it was now. Rosamond was profoundly useful both to husband and wife. The dark-eyed beauty smoothed over many difficulties, assisted to keep the banker in good humour, and was unremitting in her affection for dear Dorothea, and when Lord Marsden joined them, apparently quite by accident, she was able to spare a few smiles and bon mots for him.

Henry Lord Marsden was a fair, effeminate-looking man about thirty, with great affectation of manner and much sterling kindness hidden beneath an apparent carelessness.

The young nobleman attached himself to the banker's party, and all the pleasant time they spent in the Black Forest he was with them. Doubtless he intended to marry Rosamond, yet he was oftener at the side of Mrs. Hastings.

Probably he had studied etiquette, and thought it would be bad breeding to throw the husband and wife too much on their own resources, so when the four were divided into two pairs he always escorted Dorothea, and Rosamond fell to her host.

It was more than a month after they had left England when at the table d'hôte at Baden a gentleman came up and claimed acquaintance with Dorothea; a man of some sixty years, tall and stately—a gentleman and a soldier, every inch of him.

"Surely I cannot be mistaken in thinking I recognise Miss Yorke?"

"Colonel Ellerslie! Is it possible?"

"Indeed it is. And what have you been doing with yourself all these years?"

"Not much."

"You and your mother ran away from us all when your poor father died. I have often wondered what became of you. How is Mrs. Yorke? Is she in Baden?"

"No, my mother is in England. She is pretty well."

"But you are not here alone?"

"No! no!" chimed in Mr. Hastings, who was very glad to renew his acquaintance with so distinguished an officer as Colonel Ellerslie; "she is with me. There is no protection like a husband's, you know."

"Mr. Hastings. Ah! I remember you now. And so my little favourite of long ago has developed into a fashionable married lady?"

"Are you making any stay in Baden, Colonel Ellerslie?"

"I am only wandering about at pleasure. I find that much more enjoyable than trying how much tight-seeing I can crowd into a given space."

"You must spare us some of your time, sir. Such an old friend of my wife must be welcome to me."

Colonel Ellerslie accepted the invitation readily. Whilst they remained in Baden he saw a great deal of the Hastings.

He treated Dorothea with all the kind familiarity of an old friend; but the brave soldier's sixty years of bachelor life could not prevent him from falling into the toils of blue-eyed Rosamond.

Before a week had passed it was evident to all he was desperately in love with Miss Stuart, and—strange fact—Henry Lord Marsden did not appear in the least jealous.

"Will your young friend return to England with you?" the colonel asked one day of Mrs. Hastings, when they happened to be alone.

"No; Rosamond has been away from her mother nearly a year. I am sure Mrs. Stuart will not be able to spare her longer. We shall take her back to Paris before we go on to Blankshire."

"Blankshire! You don't live in Blankshire?"

"Indeed we do. My husband prefers the country, and so do I."

"But the place in Surrey. Surely you go there sometimes? You ought not to desert your father's old house, my dear young lady."

"Colonel Ellerslie, I cannot think what you would mean. My father's home was with his regiment. He had no other."

"Indeed, he had. For years, poor fellow, he was an exile to it, but the father who banished him is dead now, and by his will left his estate and wealth to his son Harold and his heirs for ever."

"Why have I never heard of this?"

"Probably no one ever guessed the identity of Lieutenant Yorke and Harold Yorke Kyrle of Lakewood."

"Colonel Ellerslie, was my father Sir George Kyrle's son?"

"Indeed he was, and by Sir George's will you are mistress of Lakewood. Cecil Kyrle's a fine young fellow, but he has not behaved honourably about this."

"He has—indeed he has. I know he sought the supposed Miss Kyrle far and wide. It is not his fault."

"And your husband knows nothing of your prospects?"

"How could I tell him what I did not know myself?" asked Dora, simply. "Colonel Ellerslie, will you do something for me for my father's sake?"

"Willingly."

"Then never let the story you have told me pass your lips. I know Sir Cecil Kyrle and his wife. I would rather they kept Lakewood. It could bring me no pleasure. My husband is a rich man, and more money would not make us happier."

"It is a very strange request. Forgive my saying so, but it is almost a fraud on your husband."

"He likes me to be poor best. Believe me, Colonel Ellerslie, had I been an heiress Mr. Hastings would never have married me."

"You have always had your own way," said the old officer, smiling, "and I shall give it you now. Only, remember, if in the future you change your mind a word from me at any time will secure your rights."

Mrs. Hastings was fated to hold tête-à-têtes this morning. Very soon after Colonel Ellerslie had left her husband came in, a dark shadow on his handsome face.

"Elena," he said, sharply, "I shall leave Baden to-morrow. You had better tell your maid."

"What has caused such a result?" asked his wife, in surprise. "I thought you meant to stay here at least another week."

"I daresay you did."

"Has anything annoyed you?"

"Only your unbearable deceit. I made you leave Blankshire because I did not choose for you to be intimate with Mr. Eastcourt. I leave the whole direction of our tour in your hands, and you elect to come to Baden, where he is. I hate deceit. I met the man myself this morning. No doubt you have seen him every day, and read poetry and discussed music together. You are silent and uninteresting enough at home, but I daresay you can make yourself entertaining enough if you choose."

Dorothea listened to this long tirade in silence. Her heart beat quickly. Vere, then, was here, breathing the same air she breathed, seeing the same sights, seeking the same pleasures, and they had not met.

Dorothea forgot her husband's anger. She only knew for weary months she had lived without a sight of Vere.

Now the same place contained them both. Surely they must meet?

"Well?" went on Mr. Hastings, angrily. "I suppose you are busy inventing some pretty story. It's of no use. I saw Vere Eastcourt myself, and spoke to him, though I am quite aware he did his best to avoid me."

"Then you have been more fortunate than I," replied his wife, coldly. "I have not seen Mr. Eastcourt since I left the Lodge, and I did not know he was in Germany."

"I daresay."

"As you make a point of disbelieving every word I utter it might be a good plan to employ a detective to watch my actions. It is possible this would be a satisfaction to you, and I have nothing to fear."

"No, you would defy anyone."

"I am not a coward."

"I wish you were."

"Doubtless, I should be easier to bend to your will then. Now you may crush my heart, my spirit never."

"Do not make a scene," he rejoined, shortly. "We shall leave Baden to-morrow."

"Am I to acquaint Lord Marsden, Colonel Ellerslie, and the servants with the last reason of our sudden change of places?"

"Colonel Ellerslie and Lord Marsden won't care where they go as long as Miss Stuart is of the party. I don't suppose even you would sink so low as to confide in a hireling."

"I never stooped but once in my life, and that was when I married you."

"I have no time to listen to these agreeable reflections. We shall leave Baden to-morrow, and I shall tell the servants that if Mr. Eastcourt comes you are too ill to see him."

And with this parting taunt the banker left the room.

Mrs. Hastings sat on alone. She put one hand up to support her tired head, and shuddered as she looked at the plain band of gold, emblem of her fetters.

Her face looked weary, and there was many a line about her mouth. A year ago, in the little suburban lodgings, she had seemed far less sad, but she had not then yielded to Strong Temptation and committed perjury at the holy altar.

Sin leaves its blight on the fairest faces sometimes.

The door opened, and Rosamond Stuart entered. At first she thought that Mrs. Hastings was asleep, and she stood some seconds watching her.

Rosamond rejoiced at every sign of suffering on her rival's face. With her childlike beauty there was no pity or sympathy in her heart. She would have gloried in any trouble that came to Dorothea.

If by act or deed of hers that grand loveliness could have been marred the act or deed would not have been wanting. Rosamond could never forgive the woman that Vere loved that her face was fair.

Of these two sinners all my pity is for Dorothea. Rosamond could never know the loneliness, the despair, the heart-ache she had suffered.

Rosamond had a mother who loved her as her own life. This girl with her angel face cared more for herself than any other; but Dorothea, if she sinned, had yet been her worst enemy.

Mrs. Hastings opened her eyes. The angry gleam died out of Rosamond's blue orbs, and she turned to her hostess with a smile.

"I have just met Mr. Hastings, Dora, and he says we are going on to Strasburg to-morrow. I am so sorry."

"So am I," confessed the young wife, frankly.

"I did all I could to persuade Mr. Hastings to change his mind."

"You give in to him too much," retorted Miss Rosamond, smiling. "When I am married, Dora, my husband shall do just as I please. What's the use of being married if one doesn't do exactly as one likes?"

Dorothea declined to pursue this interesting problem.

"Mind you make your stipulation beforehand, Rose. I fancy neither Lord Marsden nor Colonel Ellerslie would object, for just now they seem very ready to be your obedient servants."

"Not Lord Marsden," said Rosamond, sharply. "I don't think he particularly cares whether I am at Baden or Nova Zembla."

"My dear, he haunts you."

"And you think he means to ask me to be his wife?"

"Yes."

Rosamond watched Mrs. Hastings steadily, then she smiled.

"Dora, you are not a witch yet. Believe me, in our little company there is only one captive to my fascinations, and that is Colonel Ellerslie."

"He is a good man, Rose."

"Yes," swinging her hat in a childlike fashion, "but I am not quite sure that goodness is enough to make one happy. Did you marry Mr. Hastings because he was a good man?"

"I married Mr. Hastings because he asked me, a delicate colour flushing her cheeks."

"What a delightful reason," laughing. "Then, Dora, if I don't marry Colonel Ellerslie you must quite understand it is because he didn't ask me."

CHAPTER XXL

IN PUMP COURT.

But when to mischief mortals bend their will
How soon they find it instruments of ill.

MR. EVANS did not, now that he was advancing in age, apply himself to business with all the fervour of his younger years. He very often forsook the office in Pump Court for two or three weeks at a time, leaving his partner, a limp young man, with flaxen hair and washed out eyebrows, to attend to the affairs of his clients, and this particular summer being that of eighteen hundred and seventy-four, he had begun his holidays some time before the regular long vacation, that he might be present at Lakewood to welcome Sir Cecil and Lady Kyrle on their return from their honeymoon.

If a woman loves her husband there can be nothing sweeter or more delightful to her than this "coming home"—this introduction to the

realm she is called to reign over as queen. A home belongs ten times more to a woman than a man. Whether a home be a heaven or hell depends on the woman who is at the head of it.

To Maude Kyrle coming home was unalloyed pleasure. Her whole heart was her husband's, and she knew how well he loved the grand old place where his ancestors had been born and died. They were her ancestors too. Maude and Cecil had a common past. She was half a Kyrle, and her portrait already hung in the old gallery where her face was the fairest of the Ladies Kyrle.

Lady Isabel was there to receive her children, and Mr. Evans stood beside her. As Maude passed through the long file of servants and heard their ready welcome, a great lump rose in her throat, that she should be the cause of so much emotion, and Mr. Evans, who like many old bachelors, had a habit of talking to himself, muttered, inaudibly, "I only wish I felt sure Lakewood was really theirs," which shows dearly he believed in the right of ghosts to hold and possess earthly property since he knew poor Harold Kyrle's daughter had died an alien in a foreign land.

A dainty dinner just for those four; Lady Isabel delighted to be her daughter's guest; Maude looking very fair and stately as she presided at her husband's table; all went gaily, only when the mother and daughter had retired to the drawing-room, Lady Kyrle said, softly:

"I wish Vere had been here."

"He is in Germany, dear. I had hoped you and Cecil might have met him and persuaded him to come home with you."

"Mamma, what has made Vere go off like this? Did he and Rosamond quarrel? They seemed the very best of friends at my wedding."

"They were too good friends, Maude, for there to be question of their becoming anything else. Vere did not tell me his trouble, but I am sure he had one. Rosamond hinted that he was in love."

"Hardly," smiled Lady Kyrle. "There is not a single young lady in Blankshire (Rose herself excepted) whom Vere has not known from babyhood. If he meant to be inconsolable about any of them he would have begun long ago."

Lady Isabel sighed.

"There is no telling when Vere will be back."

"I'll write and scold him," promised the bride, who, in the flush of her happiness, quite believed everyone would give way to her. "Don't talk of Vere, mamma dear, it only makes you sad. Tell me about Rosamond. I have not had a single letter from her."

"She left me very soon after you did. I quite thought she would return to her mother, as I know Mrs. Stuart wished, but I heard afterwards Mrs. Hastings had persuaded her to stay in Park Lane for the rest of the season, and then go with them to Germany. I expect they have started before this."

"They may meet Vere."

"I should think not. They left very suddenly, you know, and we have heard nothing of them since. I was very fond of Mrs. Hastings, poor young thing. I never fancy, Maude, she was quite happy."

The bride shook her head.

"Who could be happy with Mr. Hastings? I loved her from the first. I shall go and see her when we are in town next spring."

So the days passed. Mr. Evans remained at Lakewood an honoured guest. Lady Kyrle used to smile at the accumulation of letters which arrived for him, and he laughingly told her he meant to leave them all unanswered till he returned to town, but one morning one of the missives seemed of serious importance, and the solicitor, utterly resisting the persuasions of his hosts, returned to London an hour after he received it.

Mr. Evans certainly thought himself very much ill-used, for the long vacation had actually begun now, and Pump Court was intolerably hot. He reached his private room exactly at



[A SECRET FOR.]

twelve, and his limp partner immediately entered for a close confabulation.

"Quite a surprise to see you back," said this gentleman, blandly, "and really there wasn't the least occasion to disturb yourself, everything is getting on well. Hobbs v. Dobbs is postponed. We have hunted up a lot of fresh evidence in Guernsey v. Sark. Several people have made their wills, and one or two heavy settlements are being drawn."

"Here, Grey," said the senior partner, grimly, but not unkindly, "I have not come up from Lakewood to hear you talk. Just listen to me. Has Mrs. Yorke been here?"

"Mrs. Yorke. Oh, yes, several times, and very difficult she was to get rid of. I believe she thought if only she stayed long enough you must come out of your hiding-place."

"How many times has she been?"

"Seven or eight, I really can't say which."

"Why on earth didn't you send me word?"

"You said I need not trouble you about anything unless it was important."

"Well, man alive, this is about the most important thing we have in the office. Why didn't you tell her to write?"

"I did, over and over again. She said she was not fond of writing."

"I daresay not, judging from the epistle she sent at last. She is coming to-day, Grey, at two o'clock, and mind I'm not disturbed whilst she stays."

Punctual to a minute was our widow. Her mourning was laid aside, and she wore a summer costume of bright blue, a white bounet with pink roses, and a parasol edged with lace; evidently Mrs. Yorke spent her allowance very lavishly.

"And a nice hunt you've gave me, Mr. Evans," she began, when the clerk had shut them in together. "After being frightened out of my seven senses, and warning you, you can't be seen morning, noon, or night!"

"I can be seen now. What did you want with me?"

"Sir Cecil's been a good friend to me, and I

don't want to see him beat. That story they told him in France was just trumped up, for I saw Dora myself the other day with my own eyes."

"Miss Yorke?"

"It's quite true. You need not look at me like that, Mr. Evans. My child's alive, and if Sir Cecil ain't careful, she'll be down on him."

"What makes you think you saw your daughter?"

"I did see her."

"When? Tell me all about it."

Mrs. Yorke asked nothing better than to enjoy the sound of her own voice. She began at once:

"It was the very day I'd been to you to get my money. I thought I could give myself a treat, so I had a bun and some soup in Oxford Street. Very dear it was too. A shilling for just a little basin, and extra for the bread."

"Never mind about the soup."

"But I do mind, I don't like to be cheated. Well, I went into the park to see all the grand ladies driving in their carriages, and as true as I'm sitting here, Mr. Evans, I saw Dora!"

"You must be mistaken."

The woman shook her head.

"So I thought myself. It gave me quite a turn, after thinking she was in her coffin. Then I said to myself, 'it was fancy,' and I got up and ran on so as to meet the carriage and get another look. I saw her better then. It was Dora right enough. She knew me and got quite white like, then she said something to the girl with her, and threw herself back in the carriage so that I couldn't see her any more."

"Was it a private carriage?"

"Oh, yes. Two horses and a coachman and footman and all."

"And the lady you took to be your daughter, how was she dressed?"

"Not much to look at. Drab and brown and yellow, I think. The girl with her was in blue and white."

"You ought to have traced this lady and found out her name."

"I couldn't run as quick as those two horses, or perhaps I might have. Anyhow, Mr. Evans, it was Dora!"

"And have you seen her again?"

"No, though I've been in the park lots and lots of times. I saw the girl who was with her two or three times. She was riding then."

Silence followed. The situation was awkward. As Mr. Evans had once told Sir Cecil, they were completely at Mrs. Yorke's mercy. The question was, was she trying to frighten them, or did she honestly believe in the resurrection of Dorothea.

"You see how I believed it," said the widow, earnestly. "My mourning wasn't half shabby, but I couldn't wear it again."

"What do you mean to do?" asked the solicitor, abruptly.

"Me! What do you mean?"

"How are you going to find your daughter, if she is your daughter?"

"I'm not going to try at all. Dora never was very dutiful to me. I like my three hundred a year a great deal better than her fine lady ways. I go out to tea three or four times a week, and everyone respects me. I daresay Sir Cecil will spend the money much better than Dora, and she can't be at all poor, or she wouldn't ride in such a grand carriage."

"But if these are your designs, why were you so anxious to see me?"

"You know the advertisement," said Mrs. Yorke, cunningly; "well, other people might see that as well as me. I don't want Sir Cecil to lose his money, or he won't be able to pay me my three hundred. So I thought I'd come and give you a word of warning."

"Then you do not intend to make any effort to see your daughter?"

"No. Dora and I are best apart. She looks older than ever now, and being so young myself, there'd sure to be words between us. We aren't a bit like mother and daughter, you know."

"I quite agree with you," in polite irony.

(To be Continued.)



[THE GIPSY'S STORY.]

LADY VIOLET'S VICTIMS.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

APHRA'S CONFESSION.

Oh what an enemy to man is man!
God help us in this warfare with our race!

WHEN Lionel awoke from his swoon he found himself in a first-class railway carriage, en route for London, with one of Dr. Moseley's assistants sitting opposite him, his face half hidden by a daily paper.

All that had happened flashed instantly through Lionel's mind. The dark, iron-faced attendant watched him with that dry curiosity which is often unpleasant to experience from strangers in railway carriages.

"I see you're better now, sir," he said, offering Lionel the paper, and taking out a dark meerschaum pipe, regarded it with the longing of all smokers who find themselves prohibited in the indulgence of that soporific charm.

"So far recovered," added Lionel, "that I can dispense with the kind attention of Dr. Moseley's friends. It's a pity you should have a journey to London for nothing. I should advise your leaving me at Thurston Junction, and returning by the next train."

He longed to be alone, to think. He was so fully convinced of his wife's death that his own misery became less an emotion than a general pervading spirit of pain. Hope and dread had vanished. There was no longer cause for fiery anger and resentment; only passive endurance remained to him. This grief must be chronic, like an old age full of distasteful woes.

But daily life still had to be met, and Lionel's thoughts drifted to Sir Hugh Allerton and the wild bush life before them both in Australia, as men rush to a battle-field to escape a withering sense of vacuity. And there was Darratt too. What he had told him might be discovered in

that old paper he was so anxious to read, and yet why now seek to unfurl the mystery of his birth? Injustice was the law of the world—and Lady Constance was dead.

"I'll take your advice, sir," said the man, as the train stopped at the Junction. "I daresay you'd like to be alone. You've had a blow, and may come to better by yourself."

Lionel had scarcely time to answer before he again perceived the gipsy Darratt running towards the train, at full speed, followed by a timid looking boy, who carried his spud and basket in evidently a confused state regarding the gipsy's actions.

It was a relief to Lionel to see his dark, familiar face. Something of the old lawless life of his boyhood kindled a glow of daring in his veins, as the strange drama that formed his career, passed before his eyes in rapid intensity.

Leaning his head out of the window he summoned the gipsy to his side.

Nothing loath, Darratt obeyed. Lionel, leaving the carriage, entered a third-class one, the dog and boy seating themselves cautiously by his side.

"So you were in a first-class conveyance this time, as right you should be," said the gipsy, showing his long white teeth and laughing, "and ye now makes free to come and chat with poor old Darratt, as held yer many a time in his arms when you was a little 'un."

"Yes, I remember," said Lionel, shading his eyes.

It was better than nothing to have his sad dreariness broken for a time by the talk of this rough gipsy.

"You've bin ill, sir, that I can see with half an eye. Try a drop of whiskey," said Darratt, hospitably, uncorking a large bottle, "you look reg'lar pale and worn."

"I have seen my wife dead in her coffin," Lionel answered, the words falling from him with oppressive anguish.

"Then, sir, take my advice. I'm only a rough, plain fellow, as you know. Go away from England. Don't sit over a bad fire a frettin' over

that. You've been ill-used all round, I know. There's those as could speak, and yet hold their tongues. Aphra for instance."

"I am going to seek Aphra to-day," he answered.

Darratt started to his feet.

"Then take me with yer, sir. I'll be ready with my remarks, which are all to the purpose. She'll not get from Lion, once he's roused."

The thought of triumphing over Aphra in Lionel's presence sent deep flushes to his cheek.

"You said she was in prison, sir."

"Yes, but thanks to Sir Hugh Allerton, she is now released."

"Then is he a likely sort of gent?"

"One of the best in the world," said Lionel, enthusiastically.

"So much the better for you. The father, you see, was an out-and-out bad 'un, and Aphra, she had a grudge against him," continued Darratt, knocking the tobacco from his pipe, "and 'twouldn't surprise me, we might find her among our tribe close ag'in Gipsy Hill. Supposin' we pay her a visit unawares like. Come, young 'un," addressing the boy, "don't go to sleep there, or I shall have to wake you up pretty rough. He slept under a hedge last night, Mr. Hargrave, so maybe he didn't get much comfit."

The boy made a vigorous effort to raise his chin from his chest. Darratt, taking the spud, hit him playfully over the shoulder.

"It will be as well for us to seek Aphra before I have a final meeting with Sir Hugh Allerton," said Lionel. "We shall most likely sail next week for Australia."

About another hour's travelling brought them to the gipsy's encampment, and with a sharp east wind blowing the dust and grit in all directions, they walked towards the spot described by Darratt.

An old woman was hanging out some clothes on a line, and a donkey hard by, was trying, with the patient contentment of his race, to make a satisfactory meal out of thistles, as

Darratt and Lionel approached the tents. Various lighted kettles gleamed through the dim obscurity of the afternoon, and the crackling of the burning sticks, the energetic movements of the gipsies, and the barking of various dogs, made up a scene not entirely destitute of harmonious picturesqueness.

At first they could perceive no human forms, but after the lapse of a few minutes, Lionel saw Aphra emerge from a group of women under some trees, and then without perceiving himself or Darratt, passed among the other gipsies and entered a tent alone.

The sight of this woman who had been imprisoned through her devotion to him, appealed to his generous nature, and made him long to spare her, although it could not lessen the resentment he yielded to, as he told himself she alone knew the secret of his birth, and perhaps had had a share in the injury and injustice under which he laboured.

Darratt, seizing his spud from the boy, who looked considerably bewildered at his new master, advanced hastily, and entering the tent where Aphra was seated, said:

"So you're ready to welcome an old friend, I suppose, Aphra? You've not forgotten, Darratt, have you? and there's another followin' me as wishes to have a few particular words with you." Then after a pause: "I'm hungry, get me something to eat."

Aphra knew of old the meaning of Darratt's tone; his hunger was assumed to lull her suspicions. Aphra was changed; her large eyes were red and swollen with weeping, and her appearance bore the stamp of utmost depression. Where was Lionel? She had sought him of late in vain. But a new fear was aroused on her mind by Darratt's manner. She felt he was her enemy.

"Speak low, Darratt," she said, rising from the hearth like some pale priestess of old, "and tell me—mind, I won't believe your lies—how much have you revealed to Lionel? Speak before he comes, because if you've failed by one hair's breadth in your part of the bargain, I'll fail in mine. Don't you play me false and think I'm old and weak, because there's the law before you, Lion, and the rope's kiss not far off."

The gipsy magnanimously disregarded this sinister allusion to his future.

"Why can't you say a kind welcome to a poor feller returned after long years. Wot d'ye mean by threats as can never work? Why ain't ye civil instead of flying off like that?" said Darratt, coolly, "and keep yer tongue still. It's easy to talk. I tell ye I'm safe, but you're not. Pedlar was drowned, and there's only a runnin' stream in a wood as can tell tales about the dead, but water don't babble, leastways, not as a judge and the gentlemen of the jury could understand; still, Aphra, I've kept quiet 'oos of the money. There's money, my lass, to be made out of our secret, and I ain't one of your sawnies to go a tellin' Mr. Hargrave he's not your child, but the legitimate son of as tough a skinned old—"

"Of whom, Darratt?" cried Lionel, entering the tent, while Aphra sprang from her seat and darted to Lionel's side. "Return to your chair by the hearth, Aphra," said Lionel, coldly, in a voice of such stern command, that Aphra fancied the dead man, Sir Phoenix, was about to address her with his icy scorn, "and wait there till I call on you to speak."

Aphra clenched her hands, and the crimson shawl she wore over her head and shoulders was rent in twain.

"Darratt, this is your work," said Aphra, her features working with unconscious agitation; "you come of a nest of rogues. Now if it had been a Cooper or a Lee I might have trusted them."

"Well, I'm sure, that's perliite," said Darratt, unconvinced.

"For the first time my son treats me as a stranger and an alien."

"A son?" echoed Lionel; "that villainy is at last played out; I am not your child!"

"He told you so," said Aphra, breathing hard and pointing to Darratt, who grasping his spud, raised his head exultingly.

Darratt nodded. He was heartily terrified by Aphra's fury, and wished he had been more reticent. Lionel spoke, every word falling like a lacerating scourge.

"So it was not the unknown father, whose image haunted my visions from boyhood, whom I have to thank for misery and ruin—not that careless spendthrift and haughty worldling I swore to find and bring to account, who has been my worst and most cruel enemy, but you!"

Aphra would have risen and thrown herself at his feet, but a gesture of his hand restrained her.

"I told you I'd bide my time," muttered Darratt, "it has come at last."

"How had I injured you? What hatred could you have borne towards me, that you have blighted my life, and that of one dearer to me than all the world beside? You have made me eat of a poisoned fruit. You have nourished me on the scoffs and insults of those too mean even to be despised. What was your motive? The gipsy's blood is in your veins, but not in mine, and gipsy's vengeance is in your deeds. Nay, do not tell falsehoods to me; take time and speak calmly. Confess the truth as if you were on your death-bed and about to meet him, my father, whom you have injured on earth. Speak, Aphra, what devilry prompted you to deal falsely with me to this bitter end?"

Darratt touched her arm; her agony of grief seemed to have dazed her senses.

"Good heavens!" cried Lionel, fiercely. "Speak to me, although it is too late to undo the past, or save the innocent! Tell me the truth this time."

Aphra rose, her eyes dull and tearless.

"It is this traitor's work," she muttered, staggering forward a few steps, and stung with the thought of Darratt's treachery. "Darratt, I warned you. Your hour has come. I will give you up to justice. The murder of Emma Grey shall be avenged."

"What! Prison hasn't tamed your 'orty spirit, my wild bird," said Darratt, eyeing her keenly, "but speak first to your son, Aphra; he's waitin' for the history of your first theft. Gipsies are rare 'ands at that, we all know."

Aphra wheeled on him like a creature at bay. She approached Lionel, and saying, "Send Darratt from me, and I will confess," sunk at his feet in speechless anguish. Lionel raised her, and turning to Darratt, waved him aside. It struck Darratt in presence of this new danger that the money he meant to extort from Lionel must inevitably be lost, and he wondered whether if he sought Sir Hugh Allerton he could levy black-mail on him by hinting he knew the rightful heir, and could put his finger on him any day. It was, however, something to have sent a final stab at Aphra after her ingratitude and disdain.

Aphra calmed herself by a superhuman effort. She clasped Lionel's hands, and rained kisses on them. Presently she said:

"I have sinned towards you past forgiveness."

"I do not intend to forgive you," he answered, putting her from him. "Will you at least make some small atonement by confession?"

But she only thought of death. Her hand stole to her side as if seeking something. He saw the action, and taking her arm, held it fast.

"It would be cowardly to die that way," he said, "and I do not care for threatening actions assumed for effect."

"Lionel," moaned Aphra, throwing herself at his feet, "have mercy on me. Don't try me too hard. I have loved you as a mother all these years. I love you still. Let love then plead for me. It will not be for long, Lionel—not for long."

"Tell me first, am I your son?"

A dull sound issued from her lips—martian words reached his ears—he heard her answer:

"No."

"How can I punish you?" he cried, thrusting her from him with a gesture of repulsion and disgust. "Great heavens! not her son!"

"He hates and spurns me," cried Aphra, her deadly pallor changing to crimson streaks that mounted to her temples in tempestuous fury.

"At least you shall be made to confess the truth at last. Do you hear me, gipsy—the truth. I will wring it from you at all hazards."

Darratt now re-entered the tent. Aphra's calmness seemed suddenly to return as if by a miracle.

"This traitor told you I was not your mother?"

"He did."

"Look at me, Darratt. Fix your eyes on mine,"

said Aphra. "How did your victim's body sink as you threw it into the pool? Did your heart beat quick and fast as you looked along the blood-stained path and listened, to be sure none saw or heard? But I was there, and will take them to the spot and say, 'This is where that double-dyed traitor Lion Darratt killed an innocent girl, and the stream and I were the only witnesses.'"

"Aphra!" cried Darratt, "are you mad?" Then in a whisper: "He knows no more but that you're not his mother. I ain't told no particulars. I thought of the vally of money first."

Aphra's mood changed. She seemed resolved on the fulfilment of a long contemplated purpose.

"It will not be a long story I've asked you to listen to," said Aphra, kneeling by Lionel's side, as he buried his face in his hands. "Yes, Darratt, you may stay. It is about my youth. Well, I was always a singular sort of a girl, so they said, and took a kind of dislike to the gipsy's rough ways, and tried to learn to read and write at odd times, and thought of raising myself out of the common ways of life."

"One day I was at a fair, selling flowers, and a gentleman asked me if I should like to sit to him for a model. I remember he said he wanted to paint a woman weeping by the waters of Babylon. This seemed a pretty sort of idea, and so I went."

"I went many times after, and I found out he was very rich, and a nobleman. Money seemed of no account to him, and he told me after a time that he was an earl."

"Which he wasn't," put in Darratt, as if defying one of the principles of the universe.

Aphra paused for breath, and now rising to her feet, hurriedly paced the floor of the tent. Lionel watched her eagerly.

"I was happy then. Something new seemed to have come to my life, like a vision we've seen for years slowly shaping itself to reality. He was very gentle and kind in his ways, not like the rough gipsy, not like Darratt. I took a kind of hatred to them, and he taught me many things, and spoke about our marriage as a settled thing."

"Ah! that's the way with all o' them aristocrats; they talk fine with their book learning, and treat human flesh as dirt," muttered Darratt, drily.

"I knew I was very poor and humble, yet I felt a strange sort of pride steal over me at times, as I saw he painted me in his grand pictures, and called me Cassandra and Berenice and Lamia, and put crowns on my head and a sceptre in my hand. It was all fooling, of course."

"After a time he changed, never cared to see me much, and spoke very harshly to me. All my prayers and beseeching only seemed to make him harder to me. Lionel! Lionel! will it be the same with you—will you emite me for my sin to you, and punish me with death?"

Her voice fell away to a whisper.

"When will you make atonement?" he asked, bending over her.

"By-and-bye," she answered, quietly, "there is only one way."

"I don't like her look," cried Darratt, "she means mischief."

"Well, then, being young and trusting, I thought all must come right some day. I couldn't bear to think this man meant wrong by me. How could he have all those lovely thoughts in his paintings, and try and teach me fine sentiments in that noble, grave way that

always calmed my frenzy, if he were mean and base as others? I trusted him as men trust a great prophet."

Lionel's hand involuntarily rested on the bowed head and tangled hair. He could pity this desolate spirit, whose life had been a slow and lingering death.

"By degrees I learnt all. I found he never wanted to see me again, and then a sort of fire seemed to take possession of me, and rise with every breath I drew, and this fire only made me think of vengeance. I cried alone on the sunless heath for nights and nights in the cold and snow, begging some change might come to me; that this flame that had burnt up all my love like a withered scroll should not urge me on to murder, for I wanted to kill him. I followed him—unknown to him—everywhere he went. I felt the edge of my dagger with a sort of dread, as if I had no further control over myself. And then came a long blank. I remembered nothing; they told me I'd been mad."

"Yes, I recollect," said Darratt. "It was Mary who nursed you all the winter time."

"After that I changed again—my purpose changed. I wanted still to hurt him some way, but I saw no means. In the dead of the night I prayed for help; I wanted to know what I could do; then I had a dream, which determined all."

"For the voices bade me rise up and carry out my vengeance. 'The innocent must suffer for the guilty,' they said; 'the sins of the father shall be visited on the children.' Come close to me, Lionel, and kiss me. The terror that has haunted me all these years, that you must discover my sin towards you and denounce me, has taken form at last, and I must die as I have lived—in silence. The voices that urged me to this wicked deed have refused to answer my prayers. I cannot confess more to you, but I can die!"

She raised her dagger, and inflicting a terrible gash in her side, sunk apparently lifeless to the earth.

CHAPTER XXIX.

ON THE TRAIL OF DEATH.

While o'er him fast, through sail and shroud,
The wreathing fives made way.

In the serene security of those famous docks of St. Katharine (for the possession of which even that respectfully connected saint might be expected to take considerable credit), amidst the eternal forest of freight of all sizes and descriptions—from the slender brigantine to the stately Leviathan that covered its placid expanse, lay the barque "Ariadne."

A rickety looking craft was the "Ariadne," possessing the appearance of a well-tarred butter-tub on an enlarged scale, and suggesting to an imaginative mind a more familiar acquaintance with the saline condiment of diet usually known as "inferior Dorset," rather than the briny element with which a more practical person would have associated it.

Despite her questionable appearance, however, the "Ariadne" had hitherto managed to keep herself and her registered five or six hundred tons at a convenient distance from the bottom of the sea.

Doubtless, to the surprise and probable mortification of several well-intentioned but misguided persons, amongst whom we may safely reckon her philanthropic owners, the eminent firm of "Death, Loader and Co.," of London and Liverpool.

On the eve of sailing for Australia, the barque was laden with a cargo composed chiefly of sand bags and other inexpensive but weighty commodities usually described as ballast, but which in the "Ariadne's" bills of lading were elevated to the dignity of agricultural implements.

This was a poetical license on the part of "Death, Loader and Co.," which had a practical effect in the matter of insurance, and we can therefore appreciate the affable humour of the head of that eminent firm (he of the cheerful

cognomen) when he "supposed it would be all the same to the mermaids," for the "Ariadne" was doomed; the barque was on its last voyage; she was on the trail of death!

It was a matter of more than hopeful anticipation among the favoured few "who knew a thing or two," that the "Ariadne" would never again see St. Katharine's Docks, or reach the port of Sydney, and the betting was two to one about her settling down for a protracted existence amongst the fishes on this side of the Cape.

And this doomed vessel, over which the shadow of fate loomed like a silent bird of prey, was the one destined to bear Lionel Hargrave and his brother, Sir Hugh Allerton, away from England.

They had turned their backs on the smiling native soil that had used them so pitilessly—while rascals had prospered—to seek new fortunes in the golden land over the sea, where, although dubious as to the popular belief that the nuggets lay about like brick-bats, yet hoped occasionally to find them the size of ordinary turnips.

Lionel and Sir Hugh were the only passengers in the "Ariadne"; the cheapness of the charges having fitted in with their straitened means, they had gladly accepted the owner's offer, which was accompanied by the grim remark, "that one or two didn't make much difference."

It was towards the close of a chilly afternoon in early spring, when Lionel and Sir Hugh (the former having assumed the title of Baron Mivar) stood in the midst of the busy hum and noise of the docks, preparatory to going on board. The signs of the life "of those that go down to the sea in ships," besides a liberal sprinkling of mundane activity, were visible everywhere.

The shrieking of caws, the hoarse tones of command of the mates, the plaintive sing-song of the sailors, the shouting of everybody interspersed with a quantity of rough oaths, which for profusion was remarkable, even among a gathering of Englishmen, and in which originality was everything—all produced a Babel of sounds sufficient to suggest to an inexperienced observer an earthly Pandemonium.

As Lionel and his brother stood on the crowded quay, a man in the garb of a sailor approached them cautiously and touched Sir Hugh's arm. The long rough great coat, coloured neckerchief, and slouch hat, in which the young baronet was attired were insufficient to hide the inborn mien of the aristocrat, for the man made a rough gesture at his forelock, as he said in a low tone:

"Beg pardon, shipmate, are you and t'other young swell a sailin' in that barque of Loader's?"

"Yes," replied Sir Hugh, in wonderment.

"Ah," went on the sailor, in quiet content. "So you do sail in that there barque, the 'Ariadne.' Botter me if you ain't greenhorns, both of ye. It's thirsty work, shipmates, handling ropes and cargo and farmin' implements."

Sir Hugh, forgetting his assumed appearance, and rather enjoying the change and freedom of the position of a young man of enterprise about to try his luck out in Australia, thought the man was either drunk on insolent, or perhaps both, and told him so.

"Mayhap, my hearty," replied the sailor, stolidly. "but we all of us 'as our failin's, mine is a weakness for rum 'ot. I don't know wot you vally your figure at, my young land-sprig," he added, measuring Sir Hugh from top to toe with a critical eye, "but I should say you might a reckoned it a trifle aloft o' sixpennorth of sperrits!"

Having recovered from his surprise, Sir Hugh laughed pleasantly, and said he was modest in the matter of self-appreciation.

"However, Jack," he added, tending him a shilling, "there's something to drink our healths with."

Jack regarded the coin dubiously, as if meditating its rejection; but his gaze wandered longingly round to that particular point of the

compasses at which his instinct assured him his favourite beverage was to be had in quantities measured chiefly by the length of his pocket, and unable to resist the effort of his imagination, he consigned the coin to his belt with a deprecatory gesture.

"So you're too prond to drink along with Jack Somers. You look a tender young lubber too, I dessey you're not used to it?"

Sir Hugh turned upon him with an angry gesture; it is one thing to breathe the air of freedom and escape from conventionality, but another to have to submit to low-bred familiarity. Lionel now interposed.

"What is it you want, my friend?" he asked, addressing the sailor.

"Rum," replied that worthy, briefly.

"I thought so," laughed Lionel, "and what then?"

"More rum," he replied. "Jack's ashore, and thirsty."

The sententious gravity of these remarks was too much for the young men. They laughed heartily.

"Then go and get it," said Lionel, "as quickly as you can; but wait, what is it you began to tell us about the 'Ariadne'?"

The sailor was moving away unsteadily when Lionel's question arrested him. He looked over his shoulder at our hero, who was regarding him with an amused smile.

"Well, I don't bear no malice, though you seem a pair of regular lubbers. Ah, you may laugh, my young swell," he went on, addressing Lionel, "but wait till you 'ave six foot o' water in the hold and a dark line o' reefers ahead, and you'll pipe to another tune, and think of Jack Somers, and mayhap your mother, if you've got one. Now, listen to me, my hearty," he said, in another tone, for he was too tipsy to be consistently resentful, "you're going to sail in that there barque of Loader's?"

"We are," replied Lionel, interested in his sudden seriousness.

"Well, mark my word, shipmates," he said, in a hoarse tone, "and think of them in the night-time: the life of a man that sails in that barque of Loader's ain't worth a tinker's oath, nor yet his blessing, and Loader's a common swindler," and with this elegant finale, Mr. Somers retreated hastily to the regions of the rum.

Lionel looked at Sir Hugh in bewilderment.

"I don't think he's so drunk as—as he might be," he said. "Perhaps he bears Loader a grudge. What on earth though is he driving at?"

"The foolish fancies in a drunken man's brain will find vent in speech," answered Sir Hugh. "He didn't know what he was saying."

"I'm half inclined to agree with you, Sir Hugh. Shall we follow and question him?"

"We have no time," replied the young baronet, glancing at his watch. "If I were to expend half-a-crown on Jack in rum he'd swear such another barque as the 'Ariadne' never floated for safety and fleetness. It's always the way with these fellows."

"We must go on board in twenty minutes," Lionel remarked, indifferently. "The die is cast; we are bound to sail to-day."

Life had not been so sweet to him that he much cared now to prize it, and something in his tone found an echo in his brother's breast. They were together; their lives already commenced to be united for the first time. Each felt the inner stirrings of affection as though they were indeed flowers springing from the same stem, and how often is love revealed by invisible promptings?

Lionel thought of his bitter wrongs, of the heartless adversity of circumstances; the pitiless fingers of fate that had woven webs to ensnare his soul; of the dear, dear love buried away from his sight; his bride, Lady Constance, lying so still and cold in her coffin, in which he had buried his fond wishes; his best aspirations; his hopes of earthly happiness. Was happiness then a weed which if once tasted poisons its possessor, leaving us but the poet's declaration:

That a sorrow's crown of sorrow
Is in rememb'ring happier things.

Cold in truth may have been that mausoleum, but not so cold as the hands and hearts that had thrust his dear one there. He thought of that one brief dream of joy, in which their lives had so mingled they seemed for ever indivisible. For one brief moment-memory bore him back to the past, and he felt once again the throb of that great pulse of ecstasy which had pervaded his being with new and resistless force—the masterful power of love.

And then the grim awakening! Here on his native soil he stood an outcast and a wanderer, after a life passed in fighting against outnumbering odds that had borne him down, his great heart panting, bleeding under the strain of torture, with no resting-place on which to lay his head, save the memory of a broken heart and a loved one's grave.

Sir Hugh was very different to Lionel in the calm insouciant way in which he met his troubles; but then a refined drawl is often difficult to clearly interpret, and Lionel's tragic nature, too intense for perfect peace, had been warped by an evil destiny. There was, however, one passion left for Lionel to cherish—Revenge, which in his care assumed the tardy ordering of slow justice. Yes, he panted for justice, as a dying soldier craves the cup of cold water to ease his thirst, increased by his cruel wounds. It may not bring life, but it will at least give relief.

He would live for justice to be worked, so that he might brand on the memories of the worldlings who had murdered the fair angel of his life the un pitying consequences of their infamy.

But over all came that sickening sense of desolation on which tyrants count, as the injured, even when muttering threats, feel tears in the tone in which they are uttered. Could resentment give the bliss of affection?

Sir Hugh had been watching the many workings of Lionel's face as he passed through this fire of reflection, the salient expression on his own handsome features being one of considerable wonderment at a man taking the trouble to think so deeply as Hargrave evidently was upon any subject whatever.

Sir Hugh was not thinking of the "Ariadne" at that moment, or of the respectability of the owners, but of the comfort of a good cigar, for he now declared himself a careful economist of mental labour and hated reflection. His impulse, however, made him grasp Lionel's hand and shake it warmly as the latter turned to him and said, in a quiet voice:

"Yes, Sir Hugh, we will go. I am ready."

Two hours later the "Ariadne" was ploughing her way under half sail down the dark river in the wake of a little tug, with Lionel and Sir Hugh Allerton on board.

A calm in mid-ocean. The "Ariadne" was helpless as a log on the bosom of the silent sea, her sails flapping listlessly against the masts without the faintest breath of wind to stir them, the albatross circling overhead with their shrill shrieks of warning—the portent of a coming storm.

The men, for the most part, sat over old tarpaulins and ropes, endeavouring to occupy their minds with the labours of their hands, or else, leaning carelessly against taffrail, smoked and talked in low tones, while the blazing sun shone down in their midst with all the fierce heat of the tropics, blistering the paint and scorching the decks, and arousing in the minds of the unfortunate seafarers an ardent longing for the icy regions of the North Pole, or half an hour's occupancy of a temperature of a hundred degrees or two below freezing point, or anywhere else out of this blinding, burning heat.

Sir Hugh and Lionel sat under an awning rigged up on the after-deck of the vessel, which afforded them a grateful shelter from the pitiless blaze of the tropical sun.

The fellow-sympathy and suffering which had drawn these two men together in the first in-

stance had warmed into deeper feeling during the five weeks' intercourse of the voyage, and they now felt that it was something more than mere chance which had thrown them together.

Sir Hugh could not but feel interested in the fearless nature of his companion, and the singularly refined and cultivated intellect of a man in so humble a position; his natural indolence of character led him to rely largely upon the more robust temperament of Lionel, while Lionel, by that indefinable instinct of birth and blood, felt drawn towards the man of unquestionable nobility, whose generous nature and perfect breeding were peculiarly fitted to command his warm admiration.

"If I were not of the most sanguine temperament," Sir Hugh was saying, "I should be inclined to think that one of two unnecessary evils awaits us. Either we are to have our throats cut, or the good ship 'Ariadne' is to take us quietly to the bottom of the sea."

"They know you have gold in your possession," Lionel answered, believing a terrible crisis was at hand.

"Yes, that's not at all improbable, but all contemplation is disagreeable. It is like falling in love, you don't know where it will end. The man who begins life by dreaming generally ends badly, unless he's a good sound blockhead on all points but his own self-interest."

"But why do you think they mean mischief towards us?" asked Lionel, doubting if Sir Hugh spoke in jest or in earnest.

"My dear fellow, I never think," replied Sir Hugh, "at least very seldom. It's a sort of subterranean upheaving of mental force with me that steals its way to the surface unasked. It may be that it is an illusion suggested by that prophetic but drunken sailor who told us that the life of a man sailing in Loader's barque wasn't worth a tinker's blessing."

"And I think he was right," said Lionel, with the cool nonchalance habitual with him in times of danger. "Now, just observe that hang-dog Hercules leaning against the mizen. His sole claim to distinction lies in the possession of the euphonious but unremarkable name of Jones, but if that fellow hasn't missed his vocation by escaping the hangman and a free burial, why, I am ready to be eaten by the sharks."

Lionel smiled.

"You are imaginative, Sir Hugh. Jones is certainly not prepossessing, indeed nearly all of them look as veritable a set of ruffians as ever sailed out of any foreign or English port, but that is hardly sufficient to warrant the chapter of horrors you have conjured up."

"I don't know," replied Sir Hugh. "The captain's drunk as usual in the cabin, raving about his lost Rebecca. We've sprung a leak; there's two feet of water in the hold. The men are growling and resentful. Salt junk and mouldy biscuits, combined with a general inappreciation of the wisdom of Providence, would in time be too much for a generation of Jobs, not to speak of this gang of ruffians."

"But how would they improve their position by murdering us?" said Lionel, "for that is what it amounts to, I suppose."

"They'd get the ship to themselves, pitch the captain and first mate overboard," replied Sir Hugh, "and run her into one of the islands, to carouse among some of the copper-coloured barbarian beauties, perhaps. I have read of such things. Heaven knows what they want, or what they'd do. The brute's chief rebellion against discipline is the chief motive-power among them at present. The captain's put that noisy Portuguese sailor in irons, and they're savage at this exercise of power."

Lionel endeavoured to treat the matter lightly, reminding Sir Hugh that his protracted study of an old copy of "Pilgrim's Progress," which formed the extent of the ship's library, might have to do with these morbid fancies.

But Sir Hugh held to his belief. The sun went down in a golden cloud, and the stars shone out with all the lustre of the tropics, but still the "Ariadne" lay helpless as a log upon the seas. Not a breath of wind stirred to clear the heated atmosphere of its insufferable oppressiveness, or

to put life into the motionless vessel and waft her away from destruction. She looked ready to settle down on that waste of waters without any further effort.

(To be Continued.)

RT. HON. W. E. GLADSTONE, M.P.

Nor since the days of Pitt and Fox—eminent statesmen and political rivals who now rest peaceably side by side in Westminster Abbey—has our country had rival leaders to compare with Lord Beaconsfield and Mr. Gladstone. It is not our intention in the present sketch to set down statements of a one-sided or partisan character, but rather to give the main facts and dates of Mr. Gladstone's career with some connexion and occasional comment. Nothing whatever is more deplorable than that mean spirit of faction which regards all that one man or side does as evil, and all that the other man or side does as good. On important public questions, and indeed on important underlying principles, men will naturally take sides in politics, and will also occasionally express themselves—by a little natural outburst—with undue vehemence. But nothing can be gained by the vice of narrow partisanship.

Political feeling seems to run extremely high at the present juncture. Our present business, however, is biography rather than political advocacy, and, while for ourselves utterly opposed to much of Mr. Gladstone's domestic and to all his recent foreign policy, we can, nevertheless, recognise his great intellectual gifts and the general excellence of his intentions. We might add that a generous admission of this kind—a generous tribute rather—was rendered by Lord Macaulay in the "Edinburgh Review," when engaged in cutting up or slashing to pieces the extremely High Church and illiberal volume of Mr. Gladstone on Church and State.

Mr. Gladstone was born in Liverpool, Dec. 29, 1809. He is the fourth son of Sir John Gladstone, a wealthy merchant, who relinquished a small business in Glasgow about 1875, and removed to Liverpool, where he acquired a large fortune in the West India trade. He was created a baronet in 1846. The son was educated at Eton and then at Oxford, where he graduated at Christchurch in 1831, as double first-class, the highest honour, and one rarely attained; and he became a Fellow of All Souls's College. He entered Parliament in December, 1832, as Conservative Member for the Duke of Newcastle's pocket borough of Newark, Nottinghamshire, which he continued to represent till 1846. In December, 1834, he was appointed by Sir Robert Peel a Junior Lord of the Treasury, and in 1835 Under Secretary for Colonial Affairs, which latter office he held for two months only, when the ministry fell. He continued to act with the Conservative Opposition until Peel's return to office in 1841, when he was sworn a Member of the Privy Council and appointed Vice-President of the Board of Trade and Master of the Mint. In this position he advocated in Parliament the commercial policy of Peel, and the revision of the British tariff in 1842 was mainly his work.

He wrote largely for the "Quarterly Review," and in 1838 published his book on Church and State, already mentioned. In May, 1843, he succeeded Lord Ripon as President of the Board of Trade; but in February, 1845, he resigned his office on the introduction of the measure for the increase of the Maynooth Grant, which was diametrically opposed in principle to his own published ecclesiastical theories. In November, 1845, Sir Robert Peel resigned, but on the failure of Lord John Russell to construct a Cabinet, Peel was recalled, and Mr. Gladstone became Secretary for the Colonies. In the Free Trade measure promulgated by Sir Robert Peel in January, 1846, Mr. Gladstone entirely concurred, but he felt himself bound in honour to throw up his seat for Newark, and was consequently out of Parliament during the debates. In 1847 he was elected for the University of

Oxford. One of his first speeches was in favour of the removal of Jewish disabilities (renouncing his former views of 1841), and on this occasion Mr. Disraeli, acting against his party, made a brilliant speech also for the Jews. Mr. Gladstone also made a very effective speech against Lord Palmerston's foreign policy in the affair of Don Pacifico.

In 1852 he was invited by the late Earl of Derby to enter his Cabinet, but declined, and on the fall of the Derby Ministry in December, 1852, he accepted the post of Chancellor of the Exchequer under the Earl of Aberdeen. In 1853 he introduced his celebrated Budget in a series of addresses, which Lord John Russell commended as "containing the ablest expositions of the true principles of finance ever delivered by an English statesman." On the resignation of Lord Aberdeen in February, 1855, and the elevation of Lord Palmerston to the Premiership, Mr. Gladstone continued in office as Chancellor of the Exchequer; but he, with others of the Peelite section, soon resigned in consequence of Lord Palmerston's refusing to oppose a motion of inquiry into the conduct of the Crimean War, which seemed indirectly to censure the Duke of Newcastle and Mr. Sidney Herbert. On the downfall of Lord Palmerston's Government and the second accession of Lord Derby to power, in 1858, Mr. Gladstone again declined the overtures of that nobleman, but in November accepted an appointment as Lord High Commissioner to the Ionian Islands.

In 1859, on Lord Palmerston's return to the Premiership, Mr. Gladstone again became Chancellor of the Exchequer. Chiefly by his instrumentality the paper duty was repealed, and that commercial treaty ratified between England and France which Cobden and Chevalier had negotiated. At the general election of 1865 he was rejected by the University of Oxford, but was returned for South Lancashire. On the death of Lord Palmerston in 1865 Mr. Gladstone became the leader of the House of Commons under Earl Russell. He successfully advocated the ministerial measures for the suppression of Fenianism, but his Reform Bill being defeated, the Ministry resigned, and were succeeded by Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli, July 6, 1866. Early in 1868 Mr. Gladstone introduced a series of resolutions in favour of the disestablishment and the disendowment of the Irish Church. A Bill for accomplishing this object was passed by the Commons, but rejected by the Peers. In the general election of 1868 Mr. Gladstone was defeated as a candidate for South Lancashire after a keen contest, but was returned by a large majority for the borough of Greenwich.

On the resignation of Mr. Disraeli's Ministry in December, Mr. Gladstone became Premier. The Irish Church Bill was passed in the session of 1869, the Irish Land Bill in 1870, and in 1871 the purchase of army commissions was abolished by an exercise of that very Prerogative of the Crown, which Liberals, when it is used by the other party, think it liberal to condemn—not sparing insolence to the Queen! In 1871, Mr. Gladstone procured the abolition of confiscation in English penal law. During the Franco-German War, Mr. Gladstone's government maintained an absolute neutrality, a course now generally admitted to be wise and patriotic. Probably the same commendation cannot, in the face of recent gigantic pretensions and aggressions, be extended to the Liberal concurrence in the abrogation of those provisions of the Treaty of Paris which established the neutrality of the Black Sea. A grand result of the Crimean War was thus heedlessly relinquished; since then Russian aggrandisement, in Khiva and elsewhere, has been condoned or even countenanced—to the great indignation of the majority of Englishmen, and of not a few independent members of the Liberal party. The Treaty of Washington, which decided the important dispute between England and the United States, was negotiated under the Gladstone administration.

In 1878, Mr. Gladstone introduced a Bill for the reform of university education in Ireland, in which a sop (as the rejection of history from

the curriculum of the college course) was vainly thrown to the Ultramontanists, and by which all Liberals who did not chance to share Mr. Gladstone's very hierarchical sympathies were much offended. A Liberal revolt ensued on this University Bill—it was decisively defeated—and Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues forthwith resigned. The Queen thereupon summoned Mr. Disraeli to form a Ministry, but he declined, as the trustee of the honour and the fortunes of his party, to take office with a House generally hostile, and indeed events swiftly justified his sagacious prevision. Accordingly, Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues resumed office; but the Ministry had to endure repeated defeats—it was accused of harassing every interest in the country, had lost its popularity, and was even caricatured at the Court Theatre (the last, however, a most reprehensible proceeding, of which a manager might well be ashamed).

Finding popularity gone, Mr. Gladstone thought it high time to relinquish power. In January, 1874, he suddenly issued an address—so unexpected, coming a few days only before the meeting of Parliament, that it was aptly described as a coup d'état—announcing the dissolution of Parliament. In this address he promised a diminution of local taxation and the abolition of the Income-tax. But the elections resulted in the return of 351 Conservatives and 302 Liberals, giving a Tory working majority of 49, as against a Liberal majority of 112 in 1868. Mr. Gladstone was returned for Greenwich by a vote of 5,968, against 6,386 in 1868. On Feb. 17 he resigned, and on the 18th Mr. Disraeli accepted the Premiership—an office he still occupies with honour and distinction.

Among Mr. Gladstone's published productions may be enumerated: "The State in its Relations with the Church," 1838; "Church Principles," 1840; "Studies on Homer and the Homeric Age," 1853; "Essays on Ecce Homo," and "A Chapter of Autobiography," 1863; "Juventus Mundi," a contribution to Homeric literature, 1869; "Vaticanism," 1874; "Homeric Synchronism," 1877; "Collected Essays, 1878"; and numerous articles in the "Contemporary" and the "Nineteenth Century" Reviews. He has also in recent years contributed to the "Quarterly," and in particular the articles on Dr. Norman Macleod and on Lord Macaulay are understood to be due to his pen.

Since his retirement from office in 1874 he has vigorously distinguished himself in Opposition. He himself—in a manner certainly unworthy of him—let out at Oxford the unpleasant statement that his leading political aim was to thwart Lord Beaconsfield! No doubt this was said under excitement; nevertheless, Mr. Gladstone seems too prone to cherish strongly personal animosities—sometimes on perfectly trivial affairs. This is an infirmity often attending strong convictions, and such strong convictions Mr. Gladstone has always unmistakably shown. In more recent years she has opposed the Public Worship Act, protecting his admired Ritualists, and has—to the general regret—appeared as the indiscriminate advocate of "Holy" Russia; in either case awayed, we cannot doubt, by certain ecclesiastical affinities which he has never disguised, and which are generally well understood. We cannot but suspect that a man of his undoubted sincerity and principle would be the first to condemn the Russian policy and proceedings if the Russians were not hierarchical and priest-led Christians (nominal Christians, truly!) and the Turks unbelievers. In other words, injustice, cruelty, or wrong-doing in general is not to be censured as such, but may be tolerated or even approved when the victims happen to be heretic or mis-believers; the very theory of the Inquisition, and as truly anti-human as anything that the "anti-human" Turk could by possibility propose!

Mr. Joseph Cowan, the Radical Member for Newcastle-on-Tyne, did not permit himself to be hoodwinked by the blasphemous pretences of the anti-human oppressors of Khiva and of Poland; and indeed, till the Bulgarian craze, the Liberal party in England had ever regarded Russia as the natural enemy of free institutions.

All liberal thinkers of the Continent still so regard her—notably, Gambetta, Kossuth, and Karl Blind. The cool proposal to thrust the Turks out of their homes, seems, if words have any meaning, likely to be used as an incitement to massacre and extermination; certain it is that the Russians, in the Rhodope passes and elsewhere, have maintained their traditions of cruelty and given us in abundance more of their lessons in massacre. This ecclesiastical and sacerdotal element of bigotry is most powerful in Mr. Gladstone—is perhaps his deepest impulse; it drove him from power on the Dublin University affair in 1873; it has distorted and—as it seems to us—seriously impaired the many fine features of his character.

Perhaps after all, of two evils, this misplaced veneration is to be preferred to the utterly anti-religious and therefore truly anti-human sentiments which too often find favour with our Radicals—among the educated agnostics of the "Fortnightly Review," or the somewhat ruffianly sedition-mongers of the Sunday Clubs. In fine, omitting any elaborate analysis, Mr. Gladstone is an unrivalled exponent of finance; a man of high culture and refinement, yet—crotchets apart—of liberal and popular sympathies; versatile in a high degree; and in all things singularly earnest and sincere. Such a character commands the respect of good men, even of those who much differ from his policy. But we sincerely hope that our country may long be preserved from the sway of our pro-Russian advocates. England for the English is a paramount consideration. We prefer Pitt, Palmerston, and Lord Beaconsfield. G.

THE BARONESS OF THE ISLES.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE recluse, having bid Ivar welcome to his hut, retreated inside and Ivar followed him.

He placed a stool beside a table, and bade his visitor be seated.

Then he proceeded to dish up from a pot which hung over the fire a dish of savoury meat and herbs, and this he placed before his guest.

Ivar expressed his thanks, and began to eat.

The man watched him with sinister, gloating eyes.

Unperceived by Ivar, the recluse picked up a heavy billet of wood which stood near the door, and holding it behind him, crept nearer his guest.

"I think," said Ivar, "that I was never more hungry. By my faith, this broth tastes like nectar."

With a sudden, pouncing movement his host leaped upon him and brought the heavy billet down upon his head.

Ivar fell forward as if killed.

"That finisheth him," muttered the treacherous scoundrel, pushing his victim to the floor. "He's not the first man I've killed with that billet."

He stopped and put his hand over Ivar's heart.

It did not seem to beat.

"He's dead," said the man; "and," he added, with a laugh, "I am his heir. He's friendless and a fugitive, he said. So much the better. No one will search for him."

He coolly proceeded to strip Ivar of his outer garments, and to clothe himself in them.

Then he pulled forth from the wall a low, rude bed.

A ring in the flooring was now revealed. He pulled this, and a trapdoor was dragged upwards revealing beneath a dark abyss.

Into this he flung the senseless body of his victim.

Then, replacing the trap, he finished his toilet to his satisfaction, and muttered his delight at the success of his treachery.

"Here I am clothed anew, at no expense," he

said to himself. "These are fine garments, too. There was a cloak, he said, under the double oak. I'll fetch it. Why, here's a purse of money. I'm in luck. These clothes and money shall get me clear of the country. I'll be off to England. I am tired of lying in hiding."

He counted the money, and soon after, in high spirits, set out for the double oak in search of the cloak Ivar had left there.

He found it and threw it over his shoulders, clasping it at his throat.

He was admiring its warmth and size, when a great sound resounded through the wood, and a dozen men, dressed in the uniform of the king's troops, dashed out upon him, headed by the spy who had tracked Ivar to this spot.

The outlaw, taken unawares, yet fought like a tiger.

Superior numbers prevailed.

In the desperate struggle the traitor was killed, and it was found that his head and face were beaten to a jelly.

It was the body of this outlaw, then, that was taken to the king as the body of Ivar. It was this body which Lady Godiva begged might be given into her charge, and which she had consigned to the burial crypt of Castle Grand as the body of Ivar.

But this had happened before Matilda's return to Man.

Where, during all these weeks, was Ivar? Why had not even his friends heard from him? Was he dead in truth? Had he—while his enemy had been buried with honours—found a nameless grave in the pit beneath the lonely hut in the wild gorge?

The young knight Ivar lay senseless for hours in the rude, deep cellar of the outlaw's hut, into which he had been thrust as dead. But life still lingered in the stalwart frame, and, after a while, it kindled into the olden flame, and Ivar breathed heavily and stirred and moaned in the darkness, and finally sat upright and stared around him with eyes that gleamed even amid those shadows.

In the first moments of returned consciousness he failed to comprehend where he was. He groped around him, and his hands encountered a wet and rocky surface, at his side and beneath him. He sat quite still and questioned his memory.

The visit to the outlaw's hut was recalled—the savory dinner—the terrible and treacherous blow which the outlaw had dealt him, levelling him to the earth.

And there his memory paused.

What had happened afterward he could only guess.

At this point in his reflections he became conscious of a keen chill which penetrated to his very bones, and in the same instant he became aware that his outer garments had been removed from his person during his insensibility.

"The scoundrel robbed me, and has either left me here for dead or intends to return presently and despatch me," he thought. "I seem to be in a natural hollow of the rocks. The air is close. I may be in a cave."

He then arose and groped his way about the cellar.

"It is not a cave," he concluded. "It is, as I thought, a natural hollow in the rocks. There seems no outlet, unless in an upward direction, and I believe this is the cellar of the outlaw's hut. He would have been likely to build his den over such a hollow. There may be a ladder here."

He crept cautiously over the middle of the cellar, coming in contact once or twice with substances which he believed to be bones. And, finally, he came upon a rickety ladder, which he climbed slowly and cautiously, listening intently for some sound of life above.

The stillness that reigned in the hut assured him that the outlaw had departed. As the scoundrel's absence might be but temporary, Ivar deemed it best to be expeditious in his movements.

Accordingly, when he arrived at the top of

the ladder, and had groped about, discovering the trap-door, he made but a brief pause, and then boldly applied his hands to the trap. But it did not yield.

It had been secured by iron bolts upon its upper side, and these were shot firmly into their place.

Ivar exerted all his strength in a succession of vigorous assaults upon the trap. It creaked, and groaned, and yielded little by little, until one great upheaval from below sent it quivering from its hinges.

The young knight clambered up into the hut.

The fire was burning low, the kettle with its savory contents still simmered over the coals.

A heap of rags lay on the floor where they had been dropped by their owner.

Ivar searched in vain for his own garments, and finally, making a virtue of necessity, shook out and brushed the rags the outlaw had worn, and put them upon his own person.

His head ached frightfully with the pain of the blow he had received, and his face was smeared with blood. He washed it off, and bound up the wounds.

He resolved to await the return of the outlaw, and administer justice to the scoundrel as well as to recover his clothes.

He made himself quite at home while he waited, applying himself to the savory stew, and reinforcing his strength as well as he was able.

But the hours passed, and the outlaw did not return.

The evening came on, and Ivar began to entertain the opinion that the robber had vanished with his spoils, and that he would not come back to the hut.

"If I were found here in his clothes, disfigured as I am by this wound," he thought, "I should be taken for him. I must be gone. As to these garments, my cloak will conceal them."

He set out at once for the double oak tree under the shade of which he had left his cloak.

He found that the cloak had vanished. It was light enough for him to observe the marks of a recent and terrible struggle in the vicinity, and a pool of blood upon the dead leaves littering the thick turf.

A brief period of reflection sufficed to put Ivar in possession of a sufficiently clear comprehension of the real facts in the case.

The outlaw had come to the double oak for the cloak, had been attacked by enemies, and someone had been killed in the affray or grievously wounded.

"He may have been mistaken for me," he thought. "If he is dead, I have no pity for him, base, treacherous hind!"

He did not stop long, fearing lest the captors of the outlaw might have been seeking him, Ivar, and learning their mistake, might return in quest of him. He set out at a brisk pace, continuing his journey towards the convent.

His walk was long and toilsome, the night was dark and wet, and his mind was in a state of gloom in consonance with that of nature. As he plodded onwards over the rough and hilly road, he thought of Matilda in her fair young beauty lying beneath the wild sea-waves, and he felt that with her had died all his hopes and ambitions, all that could render life delightful, or even bearable, to him.

His determination to renounce the world and devote himself to a monastic life gathered new force during that lonely night-march.

Perhaps, he said to himself, the Lord would accept his broken life and his devotions and grant him in return a full measure of peace, and by-and-bye a re-union in the great hereafter with her who had been the star of his existence.

In the early dawn of the gray, wet morning, the knight Ivar, clothed in the outlaw's rags, pale and haggard and footsore, arrived at the gate of Rushen Abbey and pulled the bell.

The Abbey of St. Mary of Bushen—the ruins of which are in existence to-day—was a grand old structure at a little distance from the village of Ballasalla.

Its counterpart was to be found in the Priory of Douglas, a retreat for women, as the Abbey was a retreat for men.

The Abbey, founded in 1093, by Macmanis, king of the Isles, consisted originally of an abbot and twelve monks, who lived by manual labour, and practised the virtue of self-denial to excess.

But all this had changed before the time of Ivar. Labour and abstinence and self-mortification had given place to pride, indolence and luxury.

Their revenues were princely, they receiving a third of the tithes of the kingdom of Man. Their buildings were magnificent, their rooms sumptuous, their table luxurious.

Their lands were thoroughly cultivated, and their orchards unusually prolific. Their temporal dignity had greatly increased.

The abbot was become a baron of the island, "was invested with power to hold temporal courts in his own name; and could exempt his own tenant, although a criminal, from the sentence of the Lord's Court, and try him by a jury of his own vassals."

The Prioresse of Douglas possessed equal power and privileges with the Abbot of St. Mary's, was Baroness of the Isles, and held a temporal court which rivalled in gaiety and splendour the court of the kings of Man.

Although the Abbot of St. Mary's and the Prioresse of Douglas were the head of two perfectly distinct religious establishments, separated by a distance of miles, and though they were vowed to monastic lives, yet they maintained their separate and temporal courts, as we have described, and exerted a powerful influence over the common people.

The clangor of the Abbey bell had scarcely died away when a wicket in the gate was opened and the face of a lay brother appeared at the aperture.

"What is wanted at this unseemly hour?" he demanded, eyeing Ivar's dress and wounds with disfavour and suspicion.

"Shelter, food, an audience with the abbot when he rises," answered Ivar, boldly.

"By my faith," said the lay brother, with a sneer, "but you are modest in your demands. Shelter and food you can have, for we never turn away even a dog unfed—but an audience with my lord the abbot! That's a beast of another colour. But come in. We shall see what can be done for you."

He opened the gate and Ivar entered.

He found himself in a great green court-yard, surrounded by stately walls. The lay monk led him to a room adjoining the kitchen—a room which had been prepared for the entertainment of the poor.

Everything here was spotlessly clean. The cool stone floor was strewn with rushes. The tables were scored to the last extreme of neatness.

Ivar flung himself upon a wooden settle, and the lay brother retired. He did not re-appear under a couple of hours, during which period Ivar had a refreshing sleep, but when he came he brought a bowl of broth and a loaf of black bread, which our hero devoured eagerly.

"My lord the abbot is not yet risen," said the lay monk. "The bell will ring when he enters his hall of justice, and if you have any complaint to make to him, or wish to solicit alms of him, you can seek him then. He sees anyone and everyone when he holds his court of justice."

With this, the lay brother again retired, and Ivar dropped again to sleep. Two or three peasants entered, awakening him an hour or two later, and then the bell rung, and they departed for the hall of justice.

Presently Ivar followed them.

Crossing the court, and passing by the great and stately chapel, Ivar entered the lofty room in which the abbot dispensed justice.

At the farther end of the chamber, upon a

threw on a raised dais, clothed in flowing robes, and the abbot.

He was a venerable-looking man, with long white beard and streaming hair, noble of aspect, stately and grand, with a commanding air, in which was mingled a gracious condescension.

On either side of him stood two monks in costly habits.

The peasants whom Ivar had seen had made their applications, and were now going away with smiling faces.

The abbot had granted their petty prayers, and was now ready for their successor.

A lay brother, armed and habited like a soldier, motioned Ivar to approach.

Our hero came forward, tall, erect, and soldierly, and not all his rags or wounds could conceal the grandeur of his carriage, or the nobility of his countenance.

Yet the monks made a gesture to him to stand back.

They feared lest he should draw too near their venerable lord, and wondered at his presumption in daring to enter the abbot's presence in such guise.

"I think," said the abbot, "that this case is for the consideration of the almoner. Show the stranger the way."

But Ivar raised his head in a haughty gesture, and smiled strangely.

"You do not know me, my lord?" he asked. "You have forgotten."

"Ivar," interrupted the abbot, in a joyful manner; "Ivar! Can this be possible?"

Ivar bowed low.

"I am Ivar."

"Whom we supposed lately a prisoner to the Norsemen? Who was reported killed yesterday in the Wild Gorge? Ivar!"

"The same, my lord. I have escaped my enemies and am come to ask refuge at your hands."

"Tell me how it chanced that you escaped," exclaimed the abbot, unable to command his astonishment. "A rider on his way to Castle Rushen paused here in the night to change his steed. He had great news—that the knight Ivar had returned to Man in violation of the command of the king, and that he had been slain by certain of the king's troops. And yet you escaped?"

Ivar hastened to narrate the particulars of his adventure at the outlaw's hut and all that he believed to have resulted from that adventure.

"You shall have safe refuge here," said the abbot. "I will defend you against Reginald himself. Yet it were well to let him think you dead. You shall remain with us as long as you please, as one of ourselves—as Brother Aloysius. Will this please you?"

"I am deeply grateful to you, my lord," said Ivar, with emotion. "I am come to you to offer my life in devotion to the Lord. I desire to join the monks as one of themselves, or as a lay brother, or in any capacity which it may please you to appoint. Will you receive me?"

A dozen questions rose to the lips of the abbot, but he repressed them all. He said, kindly:

"My son, be at peace. We will talk matters over with you when you shall have refreshed yourself. Go now with Brother Eustacius, and come to me an hour hence in my own parlour."

Brother Eustacius came forward and conducted Ivar thence, to a luxurious private room, where were all appliances for bath and toilet, and where refreshing drinks were served to him.

(To be Continued.)

DOG STORIES.

Intelligent dogs really adapt themselves to their conditions, as the following anecdote will prove. A deaf and dumb lady living in a German city had as a companion a younger woman, who was also deaf and dumb. They lived in a small set of rooms opening on the public

corridor of the house. Somebody gave the elder lady a little dog as a present. For some time, whenever anybody rang the bell at the door, the dog barked to call the attention of his mistress. The dog soon discovered, however, that neither the bell nor the barking made any impression on the women, and he took to the practice of merely pulling one of them by the dress with his teeth, in order to explain that someone was at the door. Gradually the dog ceased to bark altogether, and for more than seven years before his death he remained as mute as his two "companions."

When expression by sound was useless, it fell with him into absolute dumbness. Not such a complete master of the situation was the hero of the second story. A brave, active, intelligent terrier, belonging to a lady, one day discovered a monkey belonging to an itinerant organ-grinder, seated upon a bank within the grounds, and at once made a dash for him. The monkey, who was attired in jacket and hat, awaited the onset with such undisturbed tranquility that the dog halted within a few feet of him to reconnoitre. Both animals took a long, steady stare at each other, but the dog evidently was recovering from his surprise, and about to make a spring for the intruder. At this critical juncture, the monkey, who had remained perfectly quiet hitherto, raised his paw and gracefully saluted by lifting his hat.

The effect was magical; the dog's head and tail dropped, and he sneaked off and entered the house, refusing to leave it until he was satisfied that his polite but mysterious guest had departed. He evidently fancied he smelt sulphur.

BETWEEN SUNSET AND BEDTIME.

PHILIP HARTNELL was coming to visit us. We had not seen him for several years, and during that time he had been wandering up and down the earth, going round it and goodness knows where else, after the restless habit of this unsettled generation, which, it seems to me, can never be quiet under any circumstances, and only travels to places for the pleasure of rushing away as fast as possible.

Phil was a distant relation of ours and my godson, and had always considered our house his "home" during his boyish days. We were very fond of the handsome, high-spirited fellow, both as boy and man.

I used to think my sister spoiled him beyond measure, a charge which she flung back upon me with indignation; and though I strongly denied such weakness, I am afraid my conscience was not entirely at ease.

My name is John Winters, and my sister was christened Judith. We are merely a commonplace old bachelor and old maid—at least I am commonplace, and Judith only escapes by pretending to be strong-minded; but it is very shallow pretence, for she is as soft-hearted as she accuses me of being, and gets as much interested as I do in the novels which she reads aloud on winter evenings, though she declares she should never open such trashy volumes if it were not to spare my eyes and please my absurd tastes.

We are rich, and we live in a great, rambling, country house, that came to us from our grandfather. It is an odd, antiquated dwelling, but suits us all the better for that reason, and though we are not fond of leaving home, we like society, and usually manage to have pleasant people staying with us.

Philip was now in America, and was coming to visit us, as soon as he had finished some business, which he found awaiting him. He wrote, the very evening he landed, and we were to expect him on Saturday—four days from the date of his letter.

Two days before he was to arrive, Judith received a letter from Jeanie Morris, announcing that she would be with us the next day. We always claimed at least two yearly visits from our young favourite, but the year before, she had been in France, so more than a twelvemonth had elapsed without our seeing her.

"Nothing could have fallen out more delightfully," said I, when Judith read Jeanie's letter. "Upon my word, this arriving on nearly the same day looks like fate, doesn't it?"

"There you go," cried my sister, "spinning a romance as usual. Now, for mercy's sake, don't you let either Jeanie or Phil perceive how foolish you can be."

Judith was so severe upon my folly, that I felt convinced her mind had leaped at once to the same conclusion. But I was in too high good humour to retort on her, and only said:

"But admit that it would be very nice, if the two should take a fancy to one another," I persisted.

But Judith would admit nothing.

"I have lived a quarter of a century too long to meddle with young people's fancies," quoth she, "and I advise you to be content with reading volume after volume, instead of trying to invent romances on your own account."

The next day Jeanie arrived, looking lovelier than ever.

The eighteen months which had passed since her last visit had developed her form, that had been, perhaps, a little too angular before; now, though she was still slim and tall, like a young Diana, shoulders and arms were exquisitely rounded, every curve of the figure was perfect, every movement was grace itself. Her face, always beautiful, was now even more so, having gained in expression, and in delicacy of feature, without losing its perfect colour.

The next morning, at breakfast, Judith said:

"I wish, Jeanie dear, that you would go out and gather some nice flowers for me. There are violets to be found at the foot of the lawn, and the hawthorn, by the carriage drive, is just coming into bloom. We must brighten up these old rooms a little, now that you are here."

She did not tell Jeanie that she expected another guest, for whom, even more than for Jeanie, she wished the rooms "brightened up."

She intended Phil to be a surprise.

"With pleasure," replied Jeanie, "and I will go at once, as I don't want any more breakfast."

She went out, and a few minutes later, as I looked across the lawn, I saw her reaching up to pull down a spray of hawthorns. She made such a charming picture that I stopped at the window, to gaze, and even to call Judith to see also.

As she stretched up, her tall, stately figure showed like the figure of a young Greek goddess. Her sleeve falling back, revealed the delicate, yet rounded wrist, and the swell of the snowy arms and her hair, which she had left flowing over her shoulders, shone in the sunlight like half-smothered gold. "I still wear it so, in the morning," she had said, with a gay laugh, "where there are no strangers, as I used, when a child."

But all these charms were nothing compared to her face, which beamed with that spiritual loveliness to which I have already alluded. "It is a look," I had said to Judith the night before, "that only comes after suffering, and struggle, and triumph; but where can the dear girl have ever suffered?"

Suddenly the sound of wheels was heard, and a carriage came whirling up the drive. As it passed Jeanie, she looked around, and I thought even at that distance I saw her blush as she met the eyes of its occupant, a handsome young fellow, no other than Phil himself.

"She don't like being caught with her hair down," I said to Judith.

Then I saw her dart behind the trees, and vanish among the shrubbery, nor did she present herself, for nearly an hour after, having by a side-path gained the back of the house, and slipped up to her chamber, where she completed her toilet before showing herself again.

Meantime, Judith and I went mad over Phil, and though he was now a travelled, elegant young man, who ought to have been too blasé to feel pleased at anything, he was as demonstrative in his delight as if he had been a school boy.



[UNDER GREEN BOUGHS.]

"But how did you get here?" I asked. "We did not expect you till to-morrow, and by train."

"Came up the river in a friend's yacht, and drove over from the landing," he said. "Uncle Jack, you look superb—as for Aunt Judy, she is younger and more wonderful than ever."

"And you are evidently as impudent as ever—what worse could I say!" cried Judith, embracing him again.

"But where is Jeanie?" called I, at last, after an hour or so had passed.

"As I spoke, as if in answer, in walked Miss Morris, and in eager haste I introduced the pair in my own awkward fashion.

"This is that scapegrace, Phil Hartnell," I said, "You have heard us talk about him more than enough. I daresay we have made Miss Morris hate you in advance, Phil—"

What more I said I do not know; I kept on talking, though conscious that I had produced a very unexpected coup de theatre. I was evidently doing a work of supererogation in introducing those two young people.

They recognised each other, and this unexpected meeting was a surprise, which caused both strong emotion, though I saw at once it was not of an agreeable nature to either.

Phil turned pale under all the sun-burn left by his sea-voyage, and Jeanie—well, Jeanie looked as I remembered seeing her do once when she was little, and an elder girl with a bad temper boxed her ears.

She looked positively faint with a mingling of emotions in which it was difficult to tell whether

a sort of frightened surprise or proud indignation was uppermost.

I glanced at Judith. For once in her life she stood helpless, as near reduced to a state of coma as I was myself.

Of course this little scene was over in a flash. Jeanie was the first to speak. She held out her hand.

"How do you do, Mr. Hartnell?" she said. "I met your friend in France, Uncle Jack," she added, turning to me in explanation.

Judith, with the readiness of her sex, made a diversion.

It was near the dinner-hour, for we dined early in the country, and there was only just time to get ready.

She accordingly hurried Jeanie away, ordering Phil to his chamber.

"It is your old room, of course, and you know the road," she said, "so I'll not have Jack go with you and keep you talking for half an hour, while the soup gets cold."

Well, I can only guess at the feelings of the rest of the party, but that dinner was by no means the pleasant repast to which I had so eagerly looked forward all the morning.

We talked enough. Indeed, everybody talked incessantly, as if afraid of a catastrophe of some kind in case there should ensue an instant's silence.

We talked gaily, too, and laughed a great deal; but all the while I was dreadfully uncomfortable, and kept saying mal-a-propos things in spite of myself.

Judith nipped me severely, and it seemed to

my dazed intellect that our guests uttered remarks and allusions mutually galling, though they tried hard to behave to each other as if they were only casual acquaintances, meeting after a long separation.

"Did you say you met Phil in Paris, Jeanie?" I asked, at last, with my usual knack of blundering.

"I think so—I don't remember," replied she, carelessly, and went on with her tale, while Judith froze my blood with one glance of scorn, and I sank back in my chair, determined to control my tongue, though the effort should cause me to burst a blood vessel.

But, would you believe it? In less than five minutes I heard myself interrupting Hartnell, when he had taken his turn at galloping into conversation.

He was telling something about Rome—the new excavations in the Esqueline, I think—and I burst in with:

"Was Jeanie there?"

Then I felt myself turn scarlet. Again I declined helplessly in my chair; again Judith withered my soul with a glance of contempt, but this time she spoke.

"I beg and pray," said she, "that one of you will try to remember just when, where, and how many times you happened ever to encounter each other, for old Jack will allow no rational talk until you do. Not having known that you were acquainted, he insists on being dazed and stunned as if there were something extraordinary in the fact—a Ratscliffian mystery at least."

Then they all three laughed, and I finished the climax, by stammering:

"Oh, no—mystery—why should I think so—I am sure—very glad—to find you old friends."

Then Philip's voice made itself heard; excessively courteous, but with an effort at polite indifference, whose failure was palpable, even to my confused senses.

"I cannot flatter myself by supposing that I have a right to use the pleasant word you employ, Uncle Jack; but at all events, I can tell you where I first had the honour of meeting Miss Morris; it was at Rome."

I did not look up. I was afraid of committing some atrocity, even if I ventured so far as that. But I felt that Philip looked towards Jeanie Morris as he spoke; that he paused, too, with the determination of making her speak. She did, after an instant:

"Yes, Aunt Judith—three flounces. I beg your pardon, Mr. Hartnell. Oh, yes, I know now what you said; so it was Rome. I had the impression I saw you in Paris—one meets so many people in so many places, when one makes a rapid tour like mine."

"And afterwards at Biarritz," returned he, in a slow, distinct voice, that had an odd, hard ring, under its elaborate politeness.

"Biarritz, of course, what a memory you have."

If Jeanie's voice had been a shade less indifferent, one would have said that it was mocking and insolent.

I could not endure life an instant longer, without getting a glimpse of their faces. I ventured a glance up from under my eyebrows, which, fortunately, were long and shaggy. I looked first at Jeanie.

She was playing with a bunch of grapes. A picture of indifference she made, that would have been perfect in its way, had her attitude been a thought less studied, or her pretty fingers less contracted in their nervous closing over the purple fruit.

Then I glanced at Phil. He was frowning like a thunder-cloud, and his mouth was set hard and stern, under the drooping lines of his heavy moustache. At Judith I positively did not dare to look. Directly she spoke:

"Now if Jack has quite satisfied his curiosity, perhaps you will go on with your description, Philip! You may say what you like, Jeanie, I shan't have three flounces! Well, Phil, they found or they did not find—what? Between doubts as to my flounces, and Jack's absurd behaviour, I can't tell where you were!"

"Cigarette time, Aunt Jude!" cried Philip. "We must leave the statue half exhumed."

"Come away, Jeanie," cried Judith, pushing back her chair more brusquely than was proper. "Let us leave these wretches to their incantations—I can't stand smoke after dinner."

She took Jeanie's arm, and the pair left the room. The instant the door closed Phil turned quite savagely upon me.

"Why didn't you let me know that girl was to be here?" he demanded.

"How could I think of it?" pleaded I in desperation. "I did not know that you had ever set eyes on each other. Good gracious, Phil! what does it all mean?"

"Mean?" cried he. "It means that I'll not spend a night under the same roof with her! I can't help how it looks—I don't care what anybody thinks—I am off!"

"Going away? Why you'll break Judith's heart!"

"Don't talk to me about hearts!" roared Philip. "There's no such thing when women are concerned—the article was left out of their anatomy. However, that's neither here nor there—I can't stay—I would not endure another hour of such purgatory as that dinner has been for any price one could offer."

"Matters did not seem to go smoothly somehow," said I.

"Smoothly!" echoed Philip, in a voice that sounded like the blare of a war trumpet. Then he laughed, in a bitter, tragic way, that would have done credit to the Mephistopheles himself.

"Do tell me what it is all about!" I cried, feeling more bewildered than ever.

"There's never any use in explanations," returned Phil, loftily. "I am very sorry to appear rude—I can only trust to your goodness to excuse it."

"But—but only think how absurd it will look!" I interrupted, catching at that plea to induce him to rescind his resolution.

"It will be better than staying here. No, Uncle Jack, I must go! Tell Aunt Judith I received a telegram—anything!"

"But you had better see her."

"No—I can't see her," returned Philip, and I understood that though he knew from experience he could make me do anything he pleased, he was afraid to encounter Judith. "She will be angry, I know—right enough, too. But I must go; I must!"

He rose as he spoke and left the room, and I did not venture to detain him.

I sat dazed, mechanically smoking cigar after cigar, wondering what it all meant. Maybe I dropped into a doze.

Anyway, in spite of my favourite smoke, I felt as if I had a nightmare; I roused myself enough at last to think that I must join the others, when I heard Judith's step in the hall.

"Jack! Where are you, Jack?" she cried.

"Here I am," I groaned, rising to meet her.

"Did ever mortal hear the like of this," she cried, waving an open letter over her head, and looking better adapted to serve as a model for Medea, or some other unpleasant historical or poetical personage, than the feminine ruler in the household of a timid old bachelor. "Never, never! I am fifty years old, but if I was five hundred, I could not expect such a thing to happen twice."

"Wh-what is it?" I asked. "Is Philip—"

"I've not seen him—one of the men met him in the road—"

"Then he has gone after all?"

"Gone!" echoed Judith.

I can find no comparison that could do justice to her tone.

"I suppose he tells you all about it in his letter," I suggested, hoping at least to be relieved from explanations, since I really had none to offer. "What does he say?"

"Say! I think you are crazy. You are all as mad as hatters. I'll turn the house into an asylum, and shut you all up in it, if there's no other way."

"But the letter?"

"Don't I tell you it's from Jeanie," cried

Judith, fairly dancing at me in her anger and astonishment. "Jeanie has gone away!"

"Jeanie gone, too!" I muttered, and sat helpless.

"Gone, too?" demanded Judith. "Do you mean that Philip has left the house?"

I nodded. I was past speech for the moment.

"Tell me this instant what it all means?" shrieked Judith. "I'll not wait a second."

I really think she was so utterly beside herself, that if the table had not been between us, she would have shaken me without in the least knowing what she was at. I found voice to say:

"Philip went into a great state—said he wouldn't stay a night in the house with that girl. I tried to get him to see you before he had started. I thought he was with you."

Judith sat down in a chair, and glared at me.

"What does Jeanie say?" I ventured to ask.

My question agitated my sister so much, that I really thought she would fly in pieces. Then, with her usual brusque changeableness, she suddenly began to read the note aloud.

"DEAREST AUNT JUDITH,—You must forgive me—sometime I will explain—I cannot now. I am leaving the house. I shall take the train to Liverpool; mamma is there. Try not to be angry with me, and invent some reason to give to Uncle Jack. I can think of none in my confusion, but I must go. It breaks my heart to behave so ill towards you; do, please, try to pardon it, and believe me always, your loving JEANIE."

"Heavens and earth!" cried I. "Gone!"

"Gone! Ordered the carriage, and drove away, while I was busy about the gardener, who is ill."

"Gone to Liverpool," I said. "Why, good gracious, Philip has gone there too."

There was a brief silence between us. The room grew rapidly darker, for twilight was coming on, so that I could not well see Judith's face.

Suddenly she startled me by bursting into a fit of laughter. There she sat and laughed like a maniac, and the more I begged to know if she had hysterics, the more she laughed.

"Oh, don't you understand," she managed, at length, to articulate.

"These two idiots were trying to run away from each other, and have run together."

I did understand. I laughed more insanely than Judith had done. I laughed till I set myself coughing so loud that she was obliged to loosen my neckcloth and pound me on the back.

While we were thus occupied, I in choking and laughing, Judith sharing my merriment and slapping me like mad, we heard a carriage drive up. A minute more we heard Jeanie's voice in the hall.

"Good heavens! she has come back," whispered Judith. "Stop where you are. She may as well think you know nothing about her going: I'll find out what it means."

My sister went away. I sat there alone in the gloom. The dining room was at the back of the house, and had glass doors opening upon the shrubberies, and these doors now stood open, for it was a warm May evening.

Suddenly I heard a step in the verandah, saw Philip's head appear in the doorway. He could not see me, but I had lighted another cigar, and it made a bright spot in the darkness, he could see that.

"Uncle Jack," he said, softly.

"Yes," my boy," said I—there was no further emotion possible to me—I was calm from utter stupefaction.

"I have come back you see," said he, rather sheepishly.

"So I perceive," said I.

"You needn't say anything to Aunt Judith," said he, in a coaxing voice. "Then he went on:

"You see, just as I was taking my ticket at the station I saw Miss—I saw your young lady friend. As she had chosen to leave the house

there was no reason why I should not come back."

"Not the slightest," said I, though I did not, in the least, know what I meant.

"What reason did she give for going?" asked Philip.

"I didn't see her," said I.

"But to Aunt Judith—you have seen Aunt Judith?"

"Oh, yes," I replied, "but I don't think she knew any more about Jeanie's reason for going than I did yours."

"I suppose I had better tell you," said Phil. "I feel rather more sane at present—I know I acted like an idiot—but you see, meeting her here, so unexpectedly, quite upset me."

"I should say there had been a pretty general upsetting," I muttered, but had sense enough not to make any reflection audible.

Just then we heard Judith call me.

"Wait here," I said, rising. "I'll go and see what she wants."

So I went out into the corridor, closing the door after me.

"Phil has come back," I whispered.

"I know it, but Jeanie doesn't," returned my sister, in a low tone. "I saw him going through the shrubberies. What are we to do now?"

"Has she said anything?"

"She won't explain. She only says she could not stop in the house with that man; that when she got to the station she saw him buying his ticket; so she came back."

"He was just going to tell me his side of the story, when you called to me," said I.

Judith clapped her hands, softly.

"Go back, and make him tell it," said she.

I obeyed passively.

I felt confident she had some motive, but I was too dazed and stupid, even to wonder what it could be.

When I returned to the dining-room, Phil was walking impatiently up and down. The moon had risen.

She was at her full, the May moon, and a great banner of light streamed in at the open windows and illuminated the apartment.

"What did Judith want?"

"Nothing. The gardener is ill. That has turned the house topsy-turvy," said I, evasively.

"I suppose Aunt Judith will blame me for her visitor's going away," said he.

"I am sure I don't know. That will depend, I suppose, on what Jeanie tells her."

"What can she tell her?" cried Phil. "I think she will be puzzled to give any account of her conduct. There never was a man so treated as I have been."

"Come, Phil," said I, "I have known Jeanie since she was a child. There must be some mistake—"

"How I loved her," he broke in; "I love her yet. That is the worst of it—that is what drove me so wild to-day. After all that has come and gone, after having been so cruelly deceived, mocked, made a jest of, that I should be such a weak idiot that the sight of her can move me; but I love her yet—yes, I do. That is what galls me so."

I was sitting near the door, which led into the library, and it must have been partially ajar, for I could hear a slight rustle and stir in the room beyond.

But I took no notice, and in an instant all was still again.

"Tell me, Phil," I urged. "At least you know you can trust me, or Judith; that we love you as if you were our younger brother—"

"Yes, yes! I know. Well, it is not much of a story," he continued, with a hard little laugh.

"I met her in Rome first, three years ago. I don't think I fell in love, I loved her from the moment I first saw her. I believe I told her so in less than a week. Well! well! after awhile she gave me reason to believe she cared."

He stopped for a moment. A treacherous sob choked his voice.

But presently he began again, in an odd, repressed voice that somehow was fuller of pain than any unrestrained emotion could ever have been.

"I may as well tell it in a few words. She

was obliged to leave Rome. Her cousins had wanted her to marry some Italian, and they quarrelled with me. But the upshot was that Jeanie and I were engaged. In July her mother was to come to France. Jeanie would be with her at Biarritz, free from her relations, and I was to join her there."

"Yes—well?"
"I had more than two months to live through. I went wandering about to pass the time as best I could. At first I received letters from her very often; then they grew more rare; then they stopped altogether. It was not yet the time she had set for me to see her; but I flew off to Biarritz, and—"

His hesitation quite maddened me. I cried out:
"Well, you saw her? For heaven's sake, tell the rest!"

"Saw her?" he repeated, savagely, shutting his teeth together till they clicked like steel springs. "Yes. I don't think I shall forget it this side of the grave!"

"Go on."
"In the train from Bordeaux I met one of her cousins, who told me that Jeanie was to marry the Italian; that she had informed them of her engagement to me as a good joke; that she had hoodwinked me simply for the fun of the thing; and that she had laid a wager that she could do so."

"What did you do?"
"I went on to Biarritz. The family had a house on the cliffs. It was evening. I went up there, determined to see Jeanie. I knew that it was probable I should be refused admittance. So I just walked into the house, for the doors were open. There was a verandah at the back, like yours here. I saw Jeanie sitting there, and the Italian was kneeling at her feet."

Once more he broke off. Once more, as he paced up and down, I heard that sudden stir in the room beyond; but it was as quickly repressed as before.

"Did you go on?" I asked.
"Go on?" returned he. "I had seen enough. There was a night train to Pau; I took it. From Pau I wrote to her; I was determined that she should not believe she had made an utter idiot of me."

"What did you write?"
"That I had to thank her for our pleasant flirtation in Rome; that, as of course as neither of us had ever continued it seriously, she would not be surprised that I hoped before long to introduce my wife to her; and that I trusted my sweet girl would rank among Miss Morris's friends."

"Good heavens, Phil!"
"Then I started for Australia, and went round the world. Well, here I am—and that is my story."

"And a pretty one it is!" cried a voice, in the library doorway, which nearly made us both jump.

We turned.
There stood Judith.

"You're a dreadful idiot, Phil!" she continued. "There was no truth in what that woman told you! The Italian did propose to Jeanie—she could not help that—I suppose you happened to be eavesdropping at the very moment?"

"Aunt Judith!"

"Hold your tongue!" cried that imperious lady. "They had kept back your letters and Jeanie's no doubt! Well, sir, the first news she had of you, after weeks of silence, was that sweet effusion you sent from Pau! Do you know what you did, sir? You nearly broke her heart!"

"If I could believe that," groaned Phil. "I would go and find her at once—beg her to—"

"Bah!" interrupted Judith. "Come here!" She pushed him into the library, and shut the door behind him.

We heard a cry from Phil, echoed by a feminine voice.

Then we neither saw nor heard our visitors for more than an hour.

The table had been cleared, and lamps brought

and Judith and I were waiting with what patience we might.

The door opened at last.
There the pair stood, a little shame-faced, but as happy a couple as one could well find.

Judith hugged them both, and so did I. Then we had some supper.

Then Judith sternly dismissed us all to our respective chambers.

"This is a respectable house, and I am a woman of order," said she; "it is past eleven o'clock, and I feel as if we had lived about ten years, BETWEEN SUNSET AND BEDTIME."

F. L. B.

DREAMS AND REALITIES.

WHEN we dream it is often against our expectations and wish. Things which we would see are not seen; those not desired forcibly intrude. Insight, invention, origination, even creative genius, bearing the well-marked stamps of our individuality yet transcending ordinary power, are possessed in dreams. The imagination is sometimes constructive, at others lucky guesses are made; and a dullard, when awake, will pass, in sleep, through rapid thought and years of experience in the twinkling of an eye.

The mind not only feeds upon the store of past ideas, but works them up into never-ending combinations; and those who have become deaf, as in the well-known case of Beethoven, will compose music involving new combinations of sound; and men who have lost their sight rejoice in the imagined beauties of a glorious landscape or a visionary picture. Condorcet, in his dream, found the last step of a difficult calculation which no power of his waking thought could discover. Tartini, in his dream, heard, as he thought, the ardent play, but when awake could not satisfactorily produce violsal music; and Coleridge's "Kubla Khan" is notable as a dream poem.

So true are dreams to us while they last, and work in such new shape and unaccountable directions, that intended crimes have been prevented and past crimes have been discovered—not by mere coincidences, but by some occult action of the mind.

Some impression, or succession of impressions, in waking moments has given to the dreamer an almost revelatory power.

The wife of General Sleeman slept within a tent which had been pitched in a lovely opening of a jungle.

Her dreams were haunted all night by the sight of dead men. The General, because of information which he had received, caused the ground to be opened, and fourteen corpses, victims of the Thugs, were discovered. It is easily conceivable that the foul odour of these dead suggested to the lady, in the unconscious cerebration of the dream, the horrible vision.

DEPTH OF AMERICAN LAKES.

THERE is a mystery about the American lakes. Lake Erie is only 60 to 70 feet deep. But Lake Ontario is 592 feet deep, 230 feet below the tide-level of the ocean, or as low as most parts of the Gulf of St. Lawrence; and the bottom of Lakes Huron, Michigan, and Superior, although the surface is much higher, are all from their vast depths on a level with the bottom of Ontario.

Now, as the discharge through the River Detroit, after allowing for the probable portion carried off by evaporation, does not appear by any means equal to the quantity of water which the three upper lakes receive, it has been conjectured that a subterranean river may run from Lake Superior by the Huron, to Lake Ontario. This conjecture is not impossible, and accounts for the singular fact that salmon and herring are caught in all the lakes communicating with the St. Lawrence, but no others.

As the Falls of Niagara must have always existed, it would puzzle the naturalist to say how these fish got into the upper lakes without some subterranean river; moreover, any periodical obstruction of the river would furnish a not-improbable solution of the mysterious flux and reflux of the lakes.

FACETIÆ.

FANCY! (GOODES) GRACIOUS.

WHY are the representatives on the road of Messrs. Parkins and Goffo always most extraordinary anomalies?—Why, because, of course, they are stationary travellers. —Judy.

UNREASONABLE.

(Scene: Boxing Night at a theatre. Doors just opened.)

A SCREECH from the back:
"Charlie, mind you look after Jemmie."
Observe Charlie—that he is about the middle of the crowd with the light hat on.
Goodness knows where "Jemmie" is. —Judy.

THE LAMPLIGHTER.

WHEN gas was first used to light the streets of Dumfries, Scotland, a man was one night standing watching for the first time the lamplighter perform his duties.

When that functionary had reached the top of the ladder it suddenly gave way, and he fell to the ground.

"Grand, man," cried the watcher. "Let me see ye dae that owre again."

"Do ye think I want tae breck my neck?" the man indignantly asked.

"Dod, man," was the candid reply, "I thought ye had tae dae that tae them a'."

THE PORTRAIT.

A good lady who, on the death of her first husband, married his brother, had a portrait hung in her dining-room.

One day a visitor, remarking the painting, asked:

"Is that a member of your family?"
"Oh, that's my poor brother-in-law," was the ingenious reply.

HOTTER OR COLDER.

MR. PUNCH, SORRY,

I would have you know, sorry, that the following epistles are a true copy of letters I have received. If I do not see them in your next number, I will be after annihilating you. So be careful.

Yours, defiantly,

THE MAJOR.

P.S. Will you tread upon the tail of my coat?

I.

PROFESSOR RUSKIN presents his compliments to Major O'Gorman, and begs to inform him that he (the professor) has never accused him (the major) of "having flung a bottle of whiskey in the face of the British Public." Major O'Gorman has been misinformed.

II.

LORD BEACONFIELD presents his compliments to Major O'Gorman, and can find no resemblance between the career of the Major and the adventures of the purely imaginary hero of "Lothair." However, Lord Beaconsfield has requested some of the gentlemen who are kind enough to assist him in the management of public affairs, to read the novel, with a view to the discovery of the likeness to which exception has been taken. Should Major O'Gorman have cause of complaint, Lord Beaconsfield will have much pleasure in tendering him his apologies.

III.

MR. GLADSTONE begs to inform Major O'Gorman in reply to his note, that although he (Mr. Gladstone) has spoken and written about some millions of subjects, how many millions he will not charge himself with the responsibility of defining, he has never to his

knowledge made any allusion in writing, or by word of mouth, to Major O'Gorman.

IV.

THE Emperor of Russia has never treated Major O'Gorman with intentional discourtesy. Should the Major have any doubt upon the subject, the Emperor will be glad to see him. The Major, on crossing the frontier, will be kind enough to give his name, and ask for the train to Siberia.

V.

THE Sultan of Turkey begs to assure Major O'Gorman of his friendship. The Sultan would be glad to borrow a hundred pounds, if Major O'Gorman knows anybody having that sum to advance.

VI.

THE Khedive of Egypt, so far from laughing at Major O'Gorman, would be only too delighted to substitute the Major for Mr. Rivers Wilson, if the latter gentleman would only consent to go.

VII. (First Letter.)

No. You have been humbugged by some wag. Who are you? (Signed)

VON BISMARCK.

(Second Letter.)

I can't. I have promised my wife never to fight again. Besides, it's unlikely. (Signed)

VON BISMARCK.

(Third Letter.)

So gut! Shall be happy to meet you in a whiskey-drinking bout. (Signed)

VON BISMARCK.

And so the correspondence ends.

—Punch.

NEW YEAR'S EVE.

CLASH, you midnight bells, clash on,

For the year so nearly gone;

Clash it to its death,

Death of all its feverish strife,

Joy and sadness, all the life

Of its now spent breath.

Clash, you joyous bells, clash in

The young year that will begin

When the old year dies;

Pray we, that he bearer be

Of all good that we would see,

Of all life can prize. —Fun.

A POOR JEST.

ON Saturday last a suburban curate announced that "On Monday next there will be an entertainment in aid of giving a New Year's dinner to the local poor at 8 o'clock." For the poor to dine at 8 is a rich idea. —Fun.

WHAT'S THE ODDS?

THE struggle between the Clericals in France and the Minister of Public Instruction is continuing, the betting being decidedly on the latter. In fact, in the language of the ring, it is not quite three to one bar one on him, it is at all events three to one, Bar-doux! —Fun.

"BETWIXT AND BETWEEN."

FRIENDLY POTMAN (to cabby): "Well, Henery, are you goin' out with that kickin' 'oss to-day?"

CABBY: "No, Robert, it's four-wheeler's turn this time; a kickin' 'oss may do for a 'ansom, y'see—yur got yer fare 'twixt you an' 'is 'eels if he was to turn haccidental, but a four-wheeler ain't, you see." —Fun.

STATISTICS.

THE receipts on account of revenue from April 1st, 1878, when there was a balance of £6,243,389, to December 14th were £51,747,387, against £51,478,318 in the corresponding period of the preceding financial year, which began with a balance of £5,988,650. The net expenditure was £26,207,842, against £52,669,158 to the same date in the previous year. The

Treasury balances on December 14th amounted to £3,426,264, and at the same date 1877 to £3,861,461.

VOLUNTEERS. — The "Volunteer Service Gazette" publishes an extract showing that the volunteer force of Great Britain on October 31 numbered 203,212, of whom 201,026 were present at inspection, and 194,179 were "efficient." This is, in round numbers, an increase of 10,000 over both the enrolled and efficient strength of the previous year. The highest enrolled number which we have ever had before has been 199,194 (in 1868), and the highest "efficient" strength that of 1876-7, 193,026.

SYMPATHY.

Ah, wise man! who counsels most sagely,

Strong woman by sorrow untried,

Don't talk to the soul grown weary,

Or the body that, smitten, has cried.

Until the same chrisom has touched you,

Your lips tasted marah as well,

Else words kindly spoken lack wisdom,

Lack sympathy's comforting spell.

Business failure comes down on your neighbour,

You call, and "you're sorry," you say;

Your own gilded threshold untarnished,

What know you of down-trodden clay?

Ailing Robin groans over his sickness,

His duty, of patience, seems plain;

But all the while you must remember

The fact that it isn't your pain!

Or the son of a widow goes seeking

His fortune. You hear it with joy,

And strongly condemn her lone weeping,

But, wise man, it wasn't your boy!

A daughter has married and vanished,

A mother cries softly to miss

The song in the house, and the foot-

step,

The morning and night given kiss.

You whisper old trite consolations,

Submission to things that must be;

It wasn't your trial, wise woman,

It wasn't your daughter, you see!

Above a short grave, softly sighing,

A young mother weeps night and

day.

"It was only a baby," you whisper,

It was hers—and was taken away!

Thrice thanks for the wonderful story,

Man of sorrows, the sunshine below,

So the sorrowful, all the world over,

In shadow may know where to go.

E. L.

GEMS.

Hope awakens courage, while despondency is the last of all evils; it is the abandonment of good—the giving up of the battle of life with dead nothingness.

THINK it not unkind when affliction befalls thee; it is all for the best that it is sent. God calls those whom he loveth, and why should he not claim his own jewels to shine in his home, though our own is made dreary? Yes, it seems hard for this to be true, that it is all for the best. But wait; soon, when like the tired pilgrim thou shalt fall, sick and weary, he will take thee home to rejoice in finding friends from whom you have

been separated. Then how true will be the saying that "it was all for the best."

WHEN you speak evil of another you must be prepared to have others speak evil of you. There is an old Buddhist proverb which says, "He who indulges in enmity is like one who throws ashes to windward, which comes back to the same place and covers him all over."

CHILDREN NOT ALWAYS HAPPY.

It has become a sort of established theory that children are always happy—that there are no cares in the little bones, and no sensitive spots in the little hearts. Consequently, people who are not parents—nay, some who are—actually believe that the years between one and fifteen are years of perpetual bliss, and that it is their duty to moderate this ecstatic condition of things whenever it is in their power to do so.

These people were probably born grown up, with stiff shirt collars, tight boots, and well stuffed pocketbooks, all properly adjusted. They have less sympathy with little ones than the heated poker has, and the little ones know it at a glance.

All day long they utter their "Don't, Billy," and "You musn't, Kate." They restrain the heels, the voices, the hands of those specimens of perpetual motion whenever it is possible. Whatever the children like to eat is at once pronounced bad for them.

The heaven-born "sweet tooth" is a crime, also the general aversion to fat meat, gravy, and spices. It is a joy to such people to dose the small unfortunates with bitter medicine, to tie red flannel about their throats, or put blisters behind their ears. They can do this under pretence of "thinking only of the poor things' good."

How often do these believers in childhood's blissful state send short-legged little ones up long flights of stairs, prefacing the order with "Your bones are young, you know," or, "Children are never tired!" How they will pursue the unfortunate little one into corners and hiding places, and taking away that enchanting Jack the Giant Killer, or Puss in Boots, in large print, and beautiful with coloured pictures, substitute the death of some dreadful little good boy—a book got up in diamond type, full of tremendous words, and boasting of one hideous illustration of the good boy in a long-tailed coat and high hat.

People like these crowd into already overcrowded cars, with the words: "These children can all stand up, you know." They "wonder" at mothers who bring their families to see magic lantern and panoramic exhibitions. "Children are such a bother," they say audibly. Oh, the sensitive little souls that thrill and ache! Oh, the suffering that only "mother," knows anything about!

Unhappily, such people are sometimes school teachers. Children under such instructors are supposed to be little automatons—things to be "kept in order" and made to sit bolt upright while a certain amount of cramming is gone through with. You could not make a teacher of that kind—of whom there are happily but few left—believe that each child is an individual. To such a teacher children are simply a little row of nuisances. Besides, are they not children? and children, even when being "smacked," scolded and bothered, "must be happy."

KING LOUIS of Bavaria is going to build a gorgeous palace after the model of the Versailles chateau and grounds, on an island in the Chiemsee, a lake in the Bavarian Tyrol. Three hundred workmen are already employed on the foundations, and the building is expected to take ten or fifteen years, costing some £1,800,000. A canal will also be cut through the island, and a lighthouse erected.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

ADMIRER.—When the young man himself expresses his regret for what he did under great provocation it is of no practical value to discuss the right or wrong of it. It is of more consequence to think what you should now do. Let a renewal of your relations, at his request, come, if it comes, without attracting much notice.

HOPEFUL.—We regard your case hopefully, but perseverance, self-distrust, and the careful use of all means at your disposal will be needed. Wait until your new and better character has been somewhat established.

JOHN.—You are labouring under a grave mistake. For the last seven years the "Result System" has been in operation in the Irish National Schools of America. For every pupil making at least ninety attendances during the twelve months previous to the Result Examination (which is a special one), the teacher receives a certain amount for each subject the pupil reaches the standard in.

M. L.—To the first question we reply, he should do nothing more till he hears from you. To the second we say no. So also to the third. As to the fourth, which is implied rather than expressed, there may have been circumstances which made the lady's declination quite prudent and proper. The presumption is that she was doing the best she could.

DORA.—We see no objection to your cultivating the acquaintance of the lady. We do not regard you as too young to think of a home, and of the habits and means needful to make it happy. You are right in saving your pence.

H. E.—No one can scatter light and do good to others without some sacrifice.

COLONEL BLOOD.—A. may only mean pleasure. B. may mean more. Why should she not—as the doctor said when taking one patient on the way to another—"kill two birds with one stone?"

C. M.—The Atlantic cable consists of seven copper wires twisted into a spiral, and covered with four coats of gutta percha, with Chatterton's compound between, and protected externally by ten wires in Manila yarn. The break is detected at the ends of the line, and its place approximately known by a means which we could not probably make known to you. Grappling irons are used to fish it up, and workmen repair the "fault."

INQUIRER.—You are mistaken in thinking that no expeditions have been sent towards the South Pole. The Enderbys, of London (merchants), sent one in 1832. In 1839 the French and American Governments sent expeditions. In 1841 our Government sent Sir James C. Ross. These are the later searches. Cook and others were earlier. Probably the barrenness of the land discovered, and of the results, accounts for comparative inactivity in the Antarctic direction.

SAM.—Three elopements would seem a superabundance in one family. Wait a while and try to obtain the parents' consent.

W.—"The People's Store," not "The Peoples' Store," is correct.

ROB.—Nothing that we know of; but a dark complexion is as good as a light one.

Q. V.—We see no necessity of the alternative you present—to get married on limited income, or to drive marriage from your mind—as you express it. Work hard, devote yourself enthusiastically to business, and increase your income.

R. W.—Latin and Greek are not essential, but they are very useful to every professional man. A young man wishing to study law should enter a lawyer's office, and read the course. Lycurus is pronounced with the "y" long, and the accent on the second syllable.

JOE D.—Continue the attentions which you have so well begun.

ELLA.—Try generous living and plenty of open-air exercise.

B.—We do not suppose the unasked sister would care to intrude her presence.

VIOLA.—It is a very serious thing to go counter to the wishes of your parents. At the same time they ought not to be unreasonable in their objections. The young man should do all in his power to conciliate them. So should you.

A COUNTRY LASS, eighteen, tall, domesticated, would like to correspond with a dark young man about twenty-four.

J. B. and S. B., two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies about eighteen. Both are twenty-one, good-looking.

HARD & HEART would like to correspond with a young lady. He is twenty-three, brown hair, medium height, good-tempered.

MARK, twenty-one, a seaman in the Royal Navy, dark brown hair, blue eyes, fond of music and dancing, would like to correspond with a young lady about his own age, good-looking, light brown hair, hazel eyes, tall, fond of music.

NUTTY, MADCAP, and WIDOW, three friends, would like to correspond with three young gentlemen. Nutty is twenty, dark hair and eyes, tall. Madcap is eighteen, auburn hair, dark eyes, medium height, fond of home and music. Widow is forty, fair, fond of children, of a loving disposition.

HEAVY GUN, twenty-one, a seaman in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with a dark young lady about twenty.

M. F., twenty-two, fair, dark blue eyes, tall, domesticated, would like to correspond with a young gentleman with a view to matrimony. Must be twenty-four, dark hair and eyes.

A. M., twenty-two, medium height, dark hair and eyes, fond of home, wishes to correspond with a young man about twenty-six, medium height, good-looking, fond of home.

C. G. and B. B., two friends, wish to correspond with two gentlemen. C. G. is twenty-four, good-tempered, of a loving disposition, fond of home. B. B. is twenty, medium height, fair.

THE BACKBITER.

THERE'S someone living in this town

(Maybe you know her name,

And maybe, should I write it down,

Your name might prove the same.)

Who, when you say, "He's good," will cry,

"Indeed! You think that true,

But"—very confidentially,

"You wouldn't—if you knew."

One says, "What pretty girl goes by?"

"Oh, horrors! I don't think

Oh! since we're you and I,

I'll say, her parents drink.

And she—well, I won't tell it out,

Though I've no doubt 'tis true,

You think she's nice and pretty, but

You wouldn't—if you knew!"

If one sings sweetly, "How she flirts!"

If dressed in style, "What taste!"

Supremely "vulgar" all her tastes,

Her dresses simply "vile."

And when good Deacon Busby failed

(A noble man and true),

She said, when he his lot bewailed,

"You wouldn't—if you knew!"

Let those love and admire who can

This malice-breathing dame,

Who seems to think a prosperous man

Must surely be to blame;

That beauty is a mark of sin—

That goodness is a crime;

She sees but thieves and rascals in

The heroes of the time.

Sometimes she doesn't hesitate

To tell us what she knows,

And in eight cases out of nine

A falsehood is all she shows;

For virtue's sake I hope to find

One good old doctrine true:

Some heat for such I should not mind,

You wouldn't—if you knew. H. F. H.

L. W. and S. N., two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen. L. W. is twenty, brown hair, hazel eyes. S. N. is nineteen, medium height, brown hair, grey eyes.

BILL and THOMAS, two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies. Bill is eighteen, tall, blue eyes. Thomas is seventeen, dark hair and eyes. Respondents must be fond of home and children.

NETTIE, twenty-one, blue eyes, of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a young man about the same age.

ROSE, twenty-one, fond of home, medium height, dark, thoroughly domesticated, would like to correspond with a young man about twenty-two, good-tempered, and fond of home.

LAURA B., twenty-one, fond of home and children, loving, golden hair, blue eyes, would like to correspond with a young man about twenty-four, dark hair, brown eyes, good-looking, medium height, fond of home and children.

ALICE, seventeen, dark hair and eyes, of medium height, would like to correspond with a gentleman with a view to matrimony.

ROSA and DORA, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. Rosa is twenty, light hair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition. Dora is eighteen, tall, dark brown hair.

MAUD and BERTIE, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. Maud is twenty, good-looking, fond of home and children. Bertie is nineteen, of a loving disposition.

D. L. and C. G., two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony. D. L. is twenty-three, medium height. C. G. is twenty, tall. Respondents must be fond of music and dancing, good-looking.

NOTICE

FOR THE NEW YEAR, 1879.

THE advent of the new year and of new blood into our Editorial Department will be pregnant, we trust, with results alike beneficial to our readers and satisfactory to ourselves. Entering upon the new year resolute for the work, it will be our ambition to make THE LONDON READER equal, if not superior, to its contemporaries. Those who have passed from childhood to middle age as subscribers to THE LONDON READER will well understand our rule—to have every number fresh, original, and attractive, which can only be assured by the engagement of the best writers.

There is no verdict so reliable as that of the people, who admit that THE LONDON READER is not merely distinguished for its unequalled tales and sketches, but contains an entertaining and useful variety of Biography, Articles, Poetry, History, Anecdotes, Facetiae, and General Information.

For the current year THE LONDON READER will continue its successful career under the most favourable auspices, and those who have never taken it would speedily do so if they knew half the good things in store for our readers. Our corps of contributors will comprise the liveliest storytellers, and number amongst them the best authors of the day in every department of literature.

Our reading matter, household receipts, &c., will be specially selected and written for the instruction and amusement of young men and women, and as nothing will appear which may not be read by every member of a family, we confidently look forward to increasing our already enormous circulation.

With the view of encouraging embryo genius, we invite amateur authors to forward to the Editor their lucubrations, with the assurance that they will receive our best attention. The multifarious queries of our correspondents will be answered by a gentleman possessing extensive knowledge and experience, and altogether we confidently rely upon making our LONDON READER as superior to its contemporaries as is an Hyperion to a Satyr. As it is the largest, so it will be our care to make it the best, and therefore the cheapest, of the Penny Weeklies.—Ed.]

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

AUDREY is responded to by—Fred C., twenty-four, of medium height.

H. P. by—W. S. S., twenty-three, medium height, dark hair, blue eyes.

H. L. by—Elevating Drum.

H. B. by—Elevating Clump.

ARABELLA by—James, twenty-eight, fond of home and children.

IDA by—F. A. P., dark, good-looking.

BERTIE by—S. A. G., medium height, dark hair and eyes, fond of dancing.

EMILY by—G. H.

BRACE by—Eva, nineteen, dark, thoroughly domesticated, hazel eyes.

BIT by—Easie, twenty-one, golden hair, dark eyes, and good-looking.

LILY by—J. M. S.

EDITH by—H. K.

MAGGIE by—H. T. Q.

H. L. by—G. B., twenty-three, medium height, fond of home.

H. P. by—Frederic K.

CLARA by—Alfred, twenty-five, light hair, blue eyes, and of a loving disposition.

WILLIAM by—Nellie K., nineteen, fair, fond of home and children.

NELLIE by—J. W.

JACK by—Theresa, twenty-two, brown hair and eyes, fond of music, fair, tall, good-looking, medium height.

JANE by—A. P., twenty-one, dark, loving.

ALL the Back Numbers, Parts, and Volumes of THE LONDON READER are in print, and may be had at the Office, 334, Strand; or will be sent to any part of the United Kingdom Post Free for Three-halfpence, Eightpence, and Five Shillings and Eightpence each.

THE LONDON READER, Post Free, Three-halfpence Weekly; or Quarterly One Shilling and Eightpence.

N.B.—Correspondents must Address their Letters to the Editor of THE LONDON READER, 334, Strand, W.C.

†† We cannot undertake to return Rejected Manuscripts. As they are sent to us voluntarily authors should retain copies.

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